



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

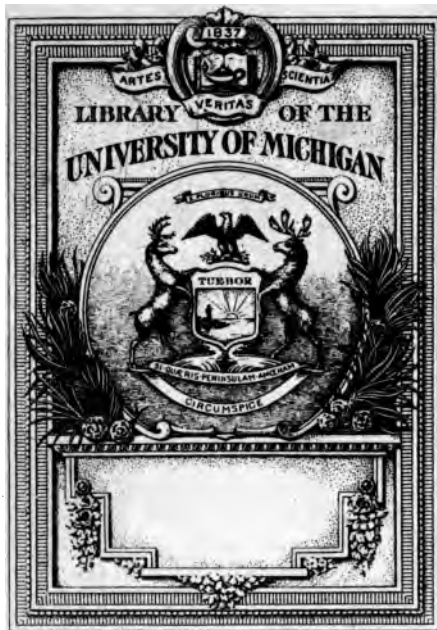
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

486964

DUPL

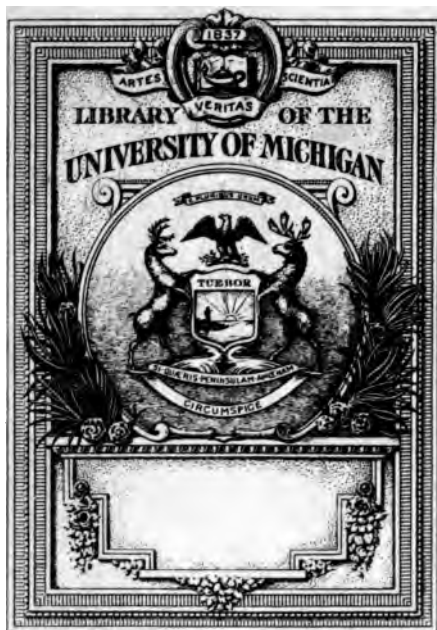
THE CHILD THAT  
DOES NOT STUMBLE

WILHELMINE PUTNAM WILLSON



THE GIFT OF  
DEAN ALLEN S. WHITNEY

FLY



THE GIFT OF  
DEAN ALLEN S. WHITNEY

FL 3.









**THE CHILD THAT DOES NOT  
STUMBLE**



THE CHILD THAT  
DOES NOT STUMBLE

BY  
WILHELMINE PUTNAM WILLSON



BOSTON: RICHARD G. BADGER  
TORONTO: THE COPP CLARK CO., LIMITED

**COPYRIGHT, 1917, BY RICHARD G. BADGER**

**All Rights Reserved**



**Made in the United States of America**  
**The Gorham Press, Boston, U. S. A.**

**GIFT OF**  
**DEAN A. S. WHITNEY**  
6-28-1935

**TO SIX DEAR CHILDREN**  
**WHO HAVE TAUGHT ME MORE THAN I HAVE**  
**EVER TAUGHT THEM,**  
**THIS BOOK IS**  
**AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED**



## AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

WE desire to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to C. Hanford Henderson, whose book, "Education and the Larger Life," more than any other one source, illuminated for a young mother the path of duty toward her children.

We also gratefully acknowledge the help and inspiration, gained in later years, from Dorothy Canfield Fisher's "The Montessori Mother," and "Mother and Children," and from her stories in which this captivating writer has proven herself to be a veritable Harriet Beecher Stowe of misunderstood childhood. (In this connection we would especially mention the short story, "What Really Happened," published in the September number of *Good Housekeeping* magazine, for 1916.)

We give most humble and hearty thanks to the Giver "of all good and perfect gifts," for everything that gives impetus to that trend of increasing sentiment in the home, liberating the child from unnecessary hardships of the spirit, and which correlates as a movement, with the efforts



of John Dewey and other noble pioneers in the educational field, to humanize and rationalize the elementary school. It is the well-poised child of the enlightened home who will be ready for the "new education."

For our own attempts to help in this movement, we would give full credit to our friends, Mary W. Whited, of Rochester, N. Y., and Margaret Guillet, of Syracuse, N. Y., whose loving appreciation of the point of view has been an unflinching encouragement.

W. P. W.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
AN EXPLANATION . . . . .	9
THE CHILD THAT DOES NOT STUMBLE . .	29
I. The Child Must Not Stumble Physically . . . . .	29
II. The Child Must Not Stumble Mentally . . . . .	34
III. The Child Must Not Stumble Morally . . . . .	60
INFORMING THE SUBCONSCIOUSNESS, OR HELPING THE CHILD TO PACK FOR HIS LIFE JOURNEY . . . . .	89
OBEDIENCE AND EFFICIENT TRAINING FOR DEMOCRACY . . . . .	113
TRUTHFULNESS . . . . .	128
A MOTHER'S PLEA FOR THE NEW EDUCA- TION . . . . .	143



## AN EXPLANATION

IN preparing this little volume, the author has merely collected and enlarged upon a few notes, which she has used in her afternoon talks to mothers. We trust that the lack of logical order may be overlooked by those who chance to read these pages with a critical eye, as they perceive that this is primarily a message from one busy mother to other busy mothers who must do their thinking to the accompaniment of household activities. The thoughts herein presented can boast only a chronological order, accordingly as they were originated before breakfast, or after, while the vegetables were being cleaned, or during the occupation of dishwashing, while garments were being made or mended.

Had our object, in giving this simple account of how the "scientific vision" has helped us, been merely to write something "interesting," we should have awaited a time of greater leisure.

Our only excuse for offering so indifferent results in our treatment of a great theme (accomplished by intermittent snatches of the pen at

intervals between interruptions) is the realization of a great need. We are being urged to help to hasten the awakening to this need, even though we can only raise an incoherent voice in doing so.

This need is for mothers to see that they, more than any other class of persons, are engaged upon the great problems of world democracy that are occupying the minds of statesmen at this particular time. Our object is not only to offer a working hypothesis, or an hypothesis that has worked in the face of practical and familiar difficulties, that we ourselves may find an easy way of escape from the harassing perplexities of our relations to children. (Though in this instance, we believe that the scientific way is pre-eminently the Christian way, and that the words of Christ, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," are surcharged with meaning to the mother who is puzzled as to how to "get along with children.") Our object in these brief essays is chiefly to show that, any cross section of the child's activities, involving his relations to others, is a functional unit of the life of the great social organism.

There are still thousands upon thousands of mothers for whom the whole of parental duty and the whole of childish virtue is epitomized in the words, "Children should be made to mind."

There is nothing so tragic as the misunderstanding of childhood implied in the assumption "unwillingness to mind." And yet this assumption is supposed to be a self-evident fact. The ultimatum, "Children should be made to mind," is delivered in tones of finality. It is supposed to thrust without the pale of inquiry those who are inclined to doubt that the subject is exhausted by this statement.

A young man wished to have the words, "From Charles to dear Mildred," engraved upon an engagement ring. The jeweler, being a wary-minded man, offered some advice based upon long observation of similar affairs. He said: "Young man, do not have 'From Charles to dear Mildred' engraved upon this ring; I advise you to have instead, '*To my first and only love.*' Then if necessary you could use it upon other occasions."

The phrase, "Children should be made to mind," is so fixed in the average mind that one must almost suppose it to have been forged in the medieval subconsciousness and engraved by tradition as a motto to fit all occasions. And so we find it doing, no matter how false its application, in view of variously specific and differing principles and sacredly personal elements involved.

Perhaps we may get directly at the heart of the

matter, through that much-quoted corollary, "Children should not be allowed to have their own way." We have tried to show in succeeding pages that when children are seeming to merit this reproachful characterization, they are not really trying to have their own way. They are trying to have our way. They have no "own way," in fact. In the last analysis their way is always our way. Even in being averse to carrying out direct commands, the child is having our way in the very manner we have imparted it to him.

In general, it is somebody else's ideas that the child is trying to carry out when he is said to be having his own way. He is only using his own mind in having your way. His impulse to do so is no more reprehensible than his impulse to breathe, or eat, or use his own hands. It is simply living on his own account that he instinctively wishes.

Two children were playing in our home last winter. The occupation was making paper boats, at which the older boy was somewhat of an expert. The younger one could not do so well, though he worked just as earnestly and was most jealous of the privilege of making the boats "all himself." When the boats were placed in fleets upon the floor, which did duty as an ocean, the

older boy who could make almost perfect boats destroyed the boats of the younger child and would have proceeded to make him some more had not the storm of anger and grief precipitated by the destruction of the boats put an end to the play. When the "powers that be" were called in consultation, the older child said that he only destroyed the little fellow's boats because he wanted to make him some better ones. And he was very honest and earnest in asserting over and over again that "he didn't see why he should be blamed for that." In vain we tried to show him that the privilege of making the boats was more to the little fellow than the having of them. He was not more obtuse in being unable to see this than many other would-be benefactors in positions of authority (having advantage by reason of superior strength) have been.

In Mr. Gladstone's famous speech of 1886, by which he introduced a Home Rule Bill into Parliament, he refers to past transactions with some of Great Britain's dependencies. Says Mr. Gladstone: "England tried to pass good laws for the colonies of that period, but the colonies said, 'We do not want your good laws; we want our own.'"

We do not need to dwell upon the universal recognition that is accorded to this principle at



this time. It is our avowed excuse for entering the great war. We say that we will help to defeat the purpose of the Kaiser to rule the world! Yet why should we defeat it? Have we any reason to suppose that Father Wilhelm would have wished to rule other than beneficently? Has he not brought prosperity and plenty to Germany? Has not science flourished there as nowhere else? Has not art and education been richly endowed? Yes, but we say that we do not want German Kultur, even though it be better than our own. We do not want German efficiency, German economy. We want to attain these things in our own way. We want to work out our own national salvation. We do not want Germany's good laws, *we want our own good laws*. What we are saying as a nation about this matter is quite right. The writer is simply pleading for an extension of the principle of democracy to that sphere of life, the exclusion from which will only make democracy anywhere else a mockery and a pretense.

We cannot win democracy for the world by the use of arms. We must make it a state of brain tissue. Great educators have realized this for some time. They have tried in some quarters to reorganize the public school system, so that it might deal consistently with the essentials of education, rather than solely with its minutiae.

Norman Hapgood, the biographer, writes of how Lincoln, upon one occasion, in the name of his law firm, declined to undertake business that to the ordinary lawyer would have seemed perfectly legitimate and desirably lucrative. "We are not real estate agents; we are lawyers. Mr. So-and-So is a man whom the Lord has made on purpose for your business." So wrote Lincoln, indicating in his subtly humorous way his opinion, that he whose mind was preoccupied with principles of equity and justice, should not be confounded with the man who was pleased to spend his time copying and filing papers, sealing them with green seals and tying them with red tape.

There have been men who, feeling the dignity of another great profession, have said in effect, "We are educators—those who lead forth the human mind." They have stood aloof from the hucksters and shopkeepers of the school system, those who think that to hustle children through a requisite number of grades in a required length of time is education, and that to fuss and putter, and pitter patter around about "methods" is further proof that children are being educated.

What is it that stands in the way of that education which is a true unfolding, and which in-

sure the love of knowledge, knowledge that is desired and sought and found, and which stimulates to more desiring and seeking and finding? It is not alone the instigators and promoters of the new "experiments" who covet for the child a larger freedom, and many an earnest teacher is struggling under the handicap of the older "systems" to give it to him. What is it that makes the small, exacting disciplinarian, with his prying and spying, his little criticism, his petty judgments, and his senseless punishments, still necessary? It is because the child has been deprived of making his own adjustments, and has been stimulated to certain "duties" by means of discipline until he waits for the accustomed stimulus—urging, punishment, or whatever it is—as a matter of course. The will of another, instead of his own initiative, starts him toward performance. Instead of redirecting his own misdirected energy (mistakes, misdemeanors), he waits for the inevitable punishment to inhibit his restless mood. One mother told the writer that her boy "got a spell every so often, when he was just spoiling for a whipping, and after he had had it he was a good boy for a long time." Presumably the nervous system might get in the habit of reacting to a whipping as an itching skin to the "scratching" that allays the irritation. One who has a

right to his opinion said of the plan indicated in Chapter Two: "I hardly think this would be applicable to a ten-year-old who had been under the old régime all his life." Of course not! We are sadly aware that it is not! The average child turned loose does not know what to do with liberty, at school or anywhere else. He begins immediately to infringe upon the liberty of another as his own liberty has been infringed upon. He is so poor in resources which draw upon the constructive instinct that to fall into some crude mischief at the instigation of another is for him the path of least resistance. He is fast reaching the state when it is easier to boss, or be bossed, than to carry out intelligent constructive plans of his own.

This child is on the way to man's estate, and as a nation we are committed to the theory of government that makes it every man's duty to be able to intelligently plan and execute for himself. If he is not such an individual, his acquiescence in a democracy is not different from his acquiescence in an autocracy. He is merely a tool for those who would use him, or so much dead weight to be carried. A free nation must be an aggregate of free and friendly men, each unit by reason of its plastic strength giving poise and strength to the whole.

We may go forth to destroy autocracy by means of armies and navies, but it is only a semblance that we destroy. The thing itself is quickly rehabilitated, as in France after the Revolution. We cannot defeat the disposition to rule despotically by refusing to be ruled. We may defeat it by refusing to rule. Nations may refuse to rule other nations. The nation may say to its own citizens: "We cannot have poor dependents, a drag upon the body politic. We cannot take so much trouble for you poor incompetents as to be continually directing your activities. You must learn to direct yourselves."

We may defeat autocracy by building up a true democracy, a free, strong, happy people, acting in unison upon fundamental principles of right! And reacting in a variety of differing ways upon their environment, in terms of industry and art and science.

Autocracy is the disposition to interfere with the liberty of another. We may defeat it *at its source* by refusing to interfere with the liberty of children. We may not make "for his own good" an excuse for interfering with the child, since we are finding out how to provide for his "good" in a less dangerous way, that of creating a good environment for him.

We shall have democracy, then, when we shall

allow the child free self-expression in an environment suggestive of social ideals, and when we give him the chance to acquire self-control.

And to whom shall we turn, in behalf of these fundamental rights of the child, but to mothers in particular, and to women in general, many of whom are demanding for themselves a full share in democracy.

We desire for our sex all possible emancipation, but most of all we would like to see women free from certain ideas that help to hold in bondage the finer instincts of motherhood.

The habit of thought that, in this connection, confuses the average mother's sense of values, is that of letting the childless home become a criterion for the home where there are children. The fashion of these homes should be as distinct and unlike as the fashion of homes in different ages and different climates. What is quite proper to the one is wholly improper to the other. No doubt the time will come when houses will be built especially for families with children. There may be grace of architecture, and beauty of interior design, as Prof. C. Hanford Henderson has suggested, but there will be in those houses no shining polished surfaces, no fragile ornaments, no dainty fabrics to make naughty boys and girls, where there are only naturally active children.

It is nothing less than tragic, to see a young mother of young children struggling to preserve order throughout a mass of miscellaneous impedimenta, and worrying over what people will think of her as a housekeeper. Pieces of pottery, rugs, and bric-a-brac must abide undisturbed, regardless of the expanding ingenuity, and developing inventiveness of the little child. Inanimate things are given precedence over beautiful abounding life. The needs of the living child are made subservient to the dead and stiffened routine of household custom.

To be able to arrange a house tastefully and to produce pleasing effects is a desirable accomplishment, but for a mother to feel humiliated, because she cannot do this is comparable to the humiliation of the biologist at the Agricultural Experiment Station, because he does not milk the cows. It is comparable to the humiliation of a Bishop, over the fact that he does not sweep the Church.

"He is just old enough to be getting into mischief," says the young mother, and she regards this period as one to be endured, and its ravages prevented if possible, and so in the first six years of a child's life, the mother tries to destroy the initiative and power of self-direction, that the "new educators" seek to restore in the next sixteen.

In the reconstruction of our ideas about babies, we shall learn to hail the troublesome period as the dawn of a great promise. The little child's faith in his own powers is not repulsed, and his efforts to partake of the activity of the world, are encouraged as the first tender shoots of a precious plant are given protection. He is allowed to follow his impulse to construct, to invent, to venture. He is protected from the sense of failure and helped to the realization of success. For it is understood that this sense of failure or realization of success, persists in his sub-consciousness as a mental attitude toward life. The "New Thought" teachers and many other modern cults are trying to put back into timid, and more or less unsuccessful individuals, this mental attitude, of which they had been dispossessed.

The mother in her right mind, is not frightened, when she sees a child having "his own way"; his "own way" is as much a part of him as his hair or his eyes. She no more thinks of it as a *naughty* way, because it is not yet "adapted," than she thinks of his adorable little hands as being deformed because they are useless for adult tasks.

As for the child's "way" being a stubborn or rebellious way,—that could only be possible, under the bare unqualified absolutism of the "Children should be made to mind" régime. Auto-



crazy breeds revolution. It is a blind leading of the blind. For it is really the disposition of the mother in trying to have her own way, that leads the child to have his in the objectionable sense that is meant.

When the mother's sympathetic insight finds the child's "way" an excusable, tolerable and lovable way, she sees it rapidly becoming her way,—everybody's way, the way of all the world in its striving for objective excellence. The child becomes orderly, conventional, a true conformist, by the short route of his "own way." Let it be noted that the painful, obstructed, super-imposed way of another has often made him either a false rebellious conformist, or a dull and meaningless one.

Children give without stint, the service of willing hands and feet, "in their own way." Their way is the nucleus of the informed, intelligent, adapted way, which, later, we call useful work in the ministries of home and social fellowship. It is perilous for our future democracy, if we make the child niggardly and selfish, by refusing his requests for attention and companionship.

There are those who will say that "giving up to a child" makes him selfish. This may be true when the "giving up" means that the child has won out in a battle of wills against a selfish and

self-centered mother. In that case the giving up was a matter of weakness on her part. But when the strong make concessions to the weak, the weaker one is strengthened in unselfishness.

The child makes omnivorous demands upon all our resources of time and intelligence. That society through the parents should make large concessions to these demands is but to save its own life. Each new cell must be given a chance for itself, though its ultimate destiny is to serve the organism of which it is a part. The need that we are trying to state is that of letting the child live his own life. His exemption from the rules that govern ordinary conduct, while he is, for the time being a law unto himself, is but the hiding of the little seed in the earth, there to feed and feed, giving nothing in return for its nourishment. That which is meant for the enrichment of universal life, must have its beginnings in separateness and exclusion.

Says Prof. Henderson, "Children are submitted to the inventions devised for adult life, to the clothing, food, confinement, ceremonies, bric-a-brac, rapid transit, in a word to the friction of modern complex living, and in such an environment they prove so altogether inconvenient that they must be suppressed in order to save the already tense nerves of the adult world." When

mothers shall refuse to permit this sacrifice of the eager child's joy in living, when they shall know how to guard and conserve it instead, for the energizing of a free nation, we shall have no more of "man's inhumanity to man." Says Bertrand Russell: "When a man's growth is unimpeded, his self respect remains intact, and he is not inclined to regard others as his enemies, but when, for whatever reason his growth is impeded, or he is compelled to grow into some twisted or unnatural shape, his instinct presents the environment as his enemy and he is filled with hatred. The joy of life abandons him and malevolence takes the place of friendliness. The malevolence of hunchbacks and cripples is proverbial; and a similar malevolence is to be found in those who have been crippled in less obvious ways. Real freedom if it could be brought about, would go a long way toward destroying hatred."

In his book "Why Men Fight," Bertrand Russell bases the reason for the continuance of war upon the fact that man's impulse to love, the instinct of constructiveness, and the joy of life, "are checked and enfeebled at present by the conditions under which men live." He continues: "Our economic system forces almost all men to carry out the purposes of others rather than their own, making them feel impotent in action and only able to

secure a certain modicum of passive pleasure. All these things destroy the vigor of the community, the expansive affection of individuals, and the power of viewing the world generously. All these things are unnecessary and can be ended by wisdom and courage. If they were ended, the impulsive life of man would become wholly different, and the human race might travel towards a new happiness and a new vigor."

When children are well nourished, in soul and body, when the impediments to their growth are removed from the home, outward hindrances to the progress of the race which the mind of man has projected into his environment will also be removed. Beautiful abounding life will overwhelm the desert places, where poverty and dearth prevail. The good-will and the glad courage and all compelling sympathies of the child spirit will have been nourished and cherished until they, in turn, will nourish and cherish the world.

Those whose left-over memories of Mother Goose include the story of the old woman who bought a pig with her crooked sixpence, will recall how she tried to set in motion a whole series of influences, in order to get the pig to jump over the stile, so that she might get home that night. The expedient of the dog, the stick, the fire, the water, the ox, the butcher, the rope, the rat, all

proved ineffectual. But our childish interest was led on to a thrilling climax when the saucer of milk, given to the cat, turned out to be the crucial event, that set in motion the whole chain of causes operating for the removal of the one obstacle to the old woman's getting home that night. We followed with breathless interest the conclusion of the tale!

The cat began to kill the rat;  
The rat began to gnaw the rope;  
The rope began to hang the butcher;  
The butcher began to kill the ox;  
The ox began to drink the water;  
The water began to quench the fire;  
The fire began to burn the stick;  
The stick began to beat the dog;  
The dog began to bite the pig;  
The pig jumped over the stile;  
And so the old woman got home that night.

Applying this quaint philosophy, we may think of the whole series of social, political, moral and religious movements seeking to remove obstacles to human progress as inert and powerless, until we have touched the mainspring of action, in the unfolding life of the child.

**THE CHILD THAT DOES NOT  
STUMBLE**



# THE CHILD THAT DOES NOT STUMBLE

## I

### THE CHILD MUST NOT STUMBLE PHYSICALLY

*“Ample childhood makes rich youth, and rich youth glorious manhood, and these, taken together, form the perfect life. . . . The process of childhood must concern itself physically, with birth, nutrition, and growth.”*

C. HANFORD HENDERSON.

THE stern caution of the Master against causing “one of these little ones, that believe on me, to stumble” (Matt. 18: 6) suggests the modern scientific view-point regarding the child. “To stumble” implies the interruption of progress. We think of the child now as a traveler from far realms of being. He is a little stranger—a pilgrim—having come a long journey, and still to pursue a further one. To cause him to stumble is to make him fall down upon his journey, to impede his movements, to obstruct his path.

During his prenatal journey the child traverses



with amazing swiftness long periods of development hinted at in the words of Boyesen:

“I am the child of earth and air and sea,  
My lullaby, by hoarse Silurian storms was  
    chanted,  
And through endless changing forms of tree and  
    bird and beast  
The toiling ages wrought to fashion me.”

To be born into the world a human baby, is to have completed a most dramatic stage of the biological career.

The little child has been thought of as an adult in miniature. The better informed see that to have longer arms, longer legs, and larger head are not the most important changes that must befall him as a growing creature. They see that the transitions of growth correspond to vast periods in the history of organic development. He has indeed a long journey to go on the road to becoming a finished human product. Bergsen's definition of time as marking qualitative rather than quantitative changes will help us to conceive of the length of that journey. To say that a child must undergo changes in every cell and fibre, on the way to becoming an adult, to say that he must change in the composition of his blood and

gland secretions,—in the structure of his heart, and most profoundly in the structure of his brain, is to more correctly describe what growth means, than merely to say that he must get bigger.

That health departments and other official sources are concerned with pre-natal and post-natal culture, and that we are able to say that infant mortality is decreasing, means that we are learning how not to cause the child to stumble.

We conserve the national resources—soil, forests, mines and water supply, but what can compare with the conservation of child life! It is said that preventable sickness more than equals our national cost of crime. Added to this the statement that nearly all criminals are physically or mentally defective, there is an economic as well as a moral significance in refraining from “causing the child to stumble.”

The great Metropolitan Life Insurance Company quotes upon some of its child welfare leaflets, “The ways you may help him are so few, the ways you may hinder him are so many.” We are reminded again of the words “causeth to stumble.” After all, our part—that of the parent, the nurse, the teacher, is largely negative. We cannot by taking thought add one cubit to his stature. He must affect his own growth. We cannot confer it upon him. But we can secure for him the con-

ditions of growth—for normal, happy growth.

As we would protect a convalescent from undue exertion, because he too is in a transitional stage, we are learning to protect the little child from unfavorable conditions. Because his blood is weak in germicidal power we protect him from exposure to disease and disease producing conditions. Because the muscular part of his little heart is ill-proportioned to its arterial capacity we protect from excitement, from anger and fright. The blessed truths of diet, and the propaganda of fresh air, the doctrine of sunshine, and the decree of uniform and non-stimulating conditions, have given us a crop of "Better babies" not only of magazine fame, but peeping out from the go-carts of every city and village—rosy and sweet and promising.

When we have learned to extend the same consistent treatment to the child of three and upwards that we have accorded to the no less critical period of earlier growth, we shall see no diminution of vigor and childish poise as the little one approaches school age and reaches out toward adolescence. A small boy of sturdy frame and radiant vitality called the writer's attention to a pale, anaemic child, the victim of a deforming disease, with the question, "What's the matter with him?" "Oh! he's sick," was the reply. "Well,

what's the *matter* with him?" he of the vigorous type persisted. "He looks like he felt awful bad! Has he got a sliver in him?" Happy the child who can conceive of no greater cause for pain than the familiar "sliver." Nevertheless, such blissful ignorance is the inherent right of every child.

And there are plenty of basic reasons—scientific, economic and moral—why we should seek to increase in number, the long, golden, untroubled days of healthy childhood. The reasons which at first made childhood necessary—namely the increasing development of the human brain,—still hold good for its gradual prolongation. Instead of hurrying children out of this period, we should shield them carefully from artificially maturing influences.

Says Prof. Henderson, "As human life responds to the ideal of a progressive perfection, its span must increase both in point of actual years and in the richness of their content. This will make each period of life correspondingly longer. As the possibilities of life grow strong and fine, it requires distinctly greater periods of time, to do even half justice to their potential content. As the human vista broadens and lengthens, there is an over-spilling of the days of childhood. And why indeed should we wish to contract and compress anything so altogether charming?"

## II

### THE CHILD MUST NOT STUMBLE MENTALLY.

*“The man who has reverence, will not think it his duty to ‘mould’ the young. He feels in all that lives, but especially in human beings, and most of all in children, something sacred, indefinable, unlimited, something individual and strangely precious, the growing principle of life an embodied fragment of the dumb striving of the world. He feels an unaccountable humility in the presence of a child—a humility not easily defensible on any rational ground, and yet somehow nearer to wisdom than the easy self-confidence of many parents and teachers. He feels the outward helplessness of the child, the appeal of dependence, the responsibility of a trust. His imagination shows him what the child may become for good or evil; how its impulses may be developed or thwarted, how its hopes must be dimmed and the life in it grow less living, how its trust will be bruised and its quick desires replaced by brooding will. All this gives him a longing to help the child in its own battle, to strengthen and equip it, not for some outside end proposed by the state or any other impersonal authority, but for the ends for which the child’s own spirit is obscurely seeking. The man who feels this can wield the authority of an educator, without infringing the principle of liberty.”*

BERTRAND RUSSELL.

OUR chief obligation to the growing child is to let him grow. And if he must bridge the gap of

aeons in compassing certain functional changes in his organism, he has no less radical and progressive steps to take in the growth of his mentality.

It is psychology applied to the home that will enable the mother to cease causing the child to stumble, when nature is hastening his brain along the path that humanity has taken from the cave-man to Henry Ford.

Is there anything more tragic than a "falling down" along the way that leads from the simple brain structure, which effected primitive man's response to hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, to the complex structures of the twentieth century brain which effects adjustment to these same needs in terms of the city,—the railway, the telegraph, corporations and tariffs, government and science?

As the baby begins to walk about there is laid upon him the stern necessity from which we are never freed—that of adjusting ourselves to our environment. It is good to see the courage and delight with which he starts upon his discoveries. He finds that he cannot put his finger through the wall but that he can stick it into the butter. He cannot loosen the table leg but certain things on top that seem as much a part of it will come off and fall down. This is all as interesting as if the cow were to jump over the moon, and the

dish run away with the spoon. All facts are equally wonderful. The important thing is to find out just what parts of this surprising environment may be disjointed and put together again, and this is the task that life sets for us all. It is what men do when they have flowers in winter and ice in summer; when they transport the conditions of one climate and country to another. The great inventors who are securing for us the conquest of earth and sea and air, are merely at work on the problem that the little child begins on his own account.

It was suggested to a mother who was complaining of the troublesome activities of her little boy, that she put away dainty and breakable articles until such a time as he should be able to appreciate *her* values (money values, artistic worth), and instead furnish the room with non-breakable, non-spoilable objects the handling of which would enable him to realize the values necessary to the child—the concepts of surface, weight, proportion, etc. The mother turned sharply to her friend and said, "I shall not give up everything for him. He has his life before him. I am going to live my life also."

Leaving out of the question the exceptional attitude of mind of a mother who could contemplate her own happiness apart from and other

than involved in the happiness of her child, let us consider her statement regarding the child. "He has his own life before him." The implication that truly unrestricted opportunity for noble and successful living can follow a falsely restricted childhood is far from the right one. The fact that there are successful individuals who have surmounted such limitations no more proves that repression is harmless than the fact that some infant Spartans survived being thrown out upon the rocks in the cold, proves that such exposure was good for babies.

In what does success consist? One dull November day there came to my door a tramp who said that he was hungry and that his shoes leaked, that his feet were sore and that he had only half a sock. Within was a distinguished man who had honored us by dining at our table. What was the difference between the guest and the beggar? What was the difference between the man whose surfeit of dinners and welcomes at warm firesides were merely a sign that he had excelled in his profession, and that a rich personality exerted its own persuasion among men, and the man who asked in dreary monotonous tones for a piece of bread at the kitchen door? *The difference between success and failure is always either a difference in strength of desire, or strength of will, or*



*a difference in brain structure—in the way the association fibres are disposed and knit together.*

We have been fond of saying that there is no class or caste or circumstance in this country that the individual cannot transcend. We are coming to see, however, that to produce the individuals who *can* transcend is the main thing after all.

We have liked to repeat that any poor boy may become president, or, if he prefers, a multi-millionaire. As to the latter, while a few poor boys have accepted the offer, so many others have remained ragged and dirty and shiftless to the end, that they create an embarrassing economic situation.

Multitudes of embryo presidents cannot even evolve into free men capable of using a free ballot in a free country, but continue through their bosses, who are simply men of independence and initiative, to inflict upon themselves the very conditions of which they complain.

The noble pioneering that is making such vast inroads into the established school system, makes the splendid claim that it is calculated to conserve those values that we state in terms of initiative, independence and brain power. To give the average child a chance to retain the rich endowment of inherited capacities which life has conferred upon him; to let these natural tendencies grow and

strengthen by giving him freedom to adapt himself to his environment while he is a child; to let him use in his own way the powers which nature means him to use later on in his struggle for existence—this is the way to bestow good fortune on the individual and to solve, or rather to dissolve, the social problem.

Educators cannot preserve to the child his natural joy in effort, his vital interest in life and learning, the glorious possibilities in his own unfolding, without the coöperation of parents. It would seem that to imagine that such coöperation could be withheld would be to assail the validity of the surest human instincts. And so it would! The truth is that habits of thought and action are not only tenacious but blinding! There is a story of a missionary who had carefully explained to one of his converts the attitude of Christian civilization toward women. The convert humbly acquiesced in the new principles and promised to be considerate in all ways towards his women folks. Shortly afterwards the missionary met this new apostle of chivalry being carried over a stream by his wife. Surprised and indignant, he expostulated. The convert listened in patience and deep penitence. It was evident also that he was greatly puzzled over something. Finally with a look of utter bewilderment and desperation

he exclaimed, "But then whose wife *should* carry me over?" Is it that we have not seen the point at all concerning the new education?\* Or is it that though we assent to these theories, when we come to their practice we prove that previous action has had its effect upon our nervous systems, and we find ourselves at the mercy of habit?

Otherwise, we cannot explain intelligent motherhood represented by the typical mother who, upon perceiving a blockade of chairs which in answer to her protest is declared to be "cars"—("They aren't chairs at all," continues the pleading voice, "they're a railroad, it's a train and I'm the conductor.")—who in the face of this assertion still orders the objects in question to be "put back." She wants order in her house! Ah! do we never see disorder that is the sign of evolving order and beauty? The artist's studio—do we not find in it disorder, dishevelment, smells, daubs, yet these are but the accompanying signs of the creation of beauty. The piles of gravel, the stacks of lumber, the sawdust and confusion, the uproar, the blockade of the streets—what does it

\* In a recent number of a great periodical a conservative writer innocently stumbles over the crucial point upon which she asks enlightenment, in the following question: "Why assume that the superior enthusiasm for working some clay into a bowl of dubious symmetry, to that for working a sum in long division, is an evidence that the former is a more valuable educational means?"

all mean? It means that a noble piece of architecture is in process of construction. A superior and permanent order is ever and always growing out of the temporary disorder of a child's free play. The mother who can cultivate the scientific imagination gets the vision of this most wonderful constructive process of the universe, and reverently holds her peace when menageries and ancient warring kings, and oceans full of submarines, suddenly occupy her home. It should not be the kind of a house, if it shelters growing children, that cannot survive multiple uses and usages.

If the author did not see so plainly and feel so intensely the need of reorganizing the home in harmony with the theory underlying the departures of the thoroughly modern school, she would not be writing these pages for other parents to read. But it is a fact that, while babies are better fed, and washed, and dressed than ever before—that these things are done more intelligently for them—they come into the world despised and rejected from the standpoint of mental and moral development.

“I came that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly,” says Jesus. Surely abundant life thrills in the life of childhood! “And whoso shall receive one of these

little ones in my name receiveth me."

The path of life for the little child is the path of the nerve fibre which threads its devious winding way from the sense organ to the brain, bringing knowledge of the Lord's good earth and the fullness thereof—its flowers rich and rare—fragrance exquisite and pure—its wondrous fullness of light and color and song. All these things must enter the heart of the child by way of the "reflex arc." Music must vibrate along this path of life. All impressions must enter the same way. And impressions are the stuffs that desire is made of, that will is made of, that intellect is made of.

Impressions are gained through the activity of the senses and through muscular contact with the outside world.

It is because children love life and desire abundant life that they are so omnivorously hungry for experience with the objects about them. It is the plan of the Creator that His children should have abundant life. Then why thwart the impulses of children? To reach out impulsively is for them to live! Life is feeling, desire, will, purpose. To thwart a child's joy in effort, to make him a colorless, nondescript individual is to unfit him for citizenship in a democracy. He will be another of those who are driven to their work by the force of circumstances, instead of

led to it by the impulse of self-expression, and he will always have a grievance against the world. To kill a child's initiative is to cripple his will and to inhibit genius, to make of him a blank nonentity or to leave him with a small remnant of mediocrity. The mother who said that her child had his life before him did not take into account the way "life" is gained. She did not know that denial of abundant life to the child meant sorrow and failure and loss to the man. It was the blunder of the pre-psychological age that it failed to conform to the laws of mental growth. It is the *crime* of the age that has read Ribot and learned that attention is a motor process.

One day last summer we were obliged, because of a stalled car, to retrace our way for several miles along a country road. We told the five-year-old child of the party that he need not walk farther than he wanted to, before stopping to rest, and that we would all sit down, and wait for him to get ready to walk some more. After a very few yards of aimless trudging—aimless to him because he did not know where he was going, or why he was going, or what he had come for—the child got very tired. Every movement of his body and the whole aspect of his little face denoted extreme fatigue. We sat down to rest with

him very often, but the intervals during which his strength would hold out became shorter and shorter. Finally the road ran along side of some land from which stone had been gathered and heaped up. We sat down to rest near one of the stone piles. And then the little boy began to occupy himself with the stones. There was not a minute of the time while we waited that he was not climbing up one side of the rough stone pile and down the other. He exerted himself much more than when walking and yet he was so "rested" when we started on again that he walked with head erect and eager step. He espied another stone pile in the distance and hastened forward with a livelier pace than we wanted to go, that he might reach it and rest after the same manner as before. Interest and desire had touched the springs of energy and determination.

The incident just described does not reveal a fact that has never been observed before. There is nothing new about this phase of child life. That which is new is the modern attitude toward it. We have ceased to quarrel with the fact. We have ceased to taunt the child with it. As though he could help it that he has plenty of strength for his spontaneous activities and little for the tasks we force him to perform! The educators have joined the group of scientists when, like the

mechanic, the electrician, the agriculturist, they have begun to conform to natural law.

The gardener does not quarrel with nature. If a certain exposure, degree of moisture or kind of fertilizer is conducive to growth, he accepts the situation without cavil.

He is guided by the signs of growth. He has no prescription for the mysterious thing itself—invisible, inscrutable power—but he knows that when fresh, vigorous stalk, and delicately curling leaf meet his eye, when fragrance is present, that the plant is growing.

The educator has become humble and cautious like the scientist. Shall we not expect that parents be guided by the signs of growth? When interest is present, when feeling is present, when desire is present, the whole personality of the child is growing. Energy is at work building up that nervous structure that is called the brain. We have an idea of what will be favorable to growth in the plant, but we wait, we watch, we compare results. If the signs are bloom and fragrance we know that though we have not penetrated into the mystery of hidden forces of growth, we are working with them. That is why the school system is henceforth to be for the child, not the child for the system. We modify our plans according to the signs. As the gardener



dreads the sight of withering leaf and drooping stalk, of blossoms dead in the bud, so the educator dreads the flagging of interest, knowing that it means spent energy and burnt out cell. In the lagging step, the reluctant young face, the enervated muscle, do you see signs of anything, oh mothers? Do you not see signs of the spent cell, retarded growth, the atrophy of those delicate elusive fibres that were about to establish associations in the brain? We know enough to recognize the physically dead child. The sight of the stiff, stark little form fills us with unspeakable grief. In the paralysis of childish enthusiasm we are made aware, only in a less degree, of spent energy and burnt out cell.

The child comes to you with his flushed face, his bright eyes, his eager hope. In the thwarting of his desire you bring about the relaxed muscle, the suspension of blood supply, the slackening of nervous tension. The subtle connection that was to have been made under this stimulus of spontaneous instinct is not made,\* and in so far as it is not, the mind is left a stark dead thing.

Since our duty to the growing plant and the growing child is the same—to keep them growing; since our supreme duty as parents and educators is to supply the conditions of growth, we

\* Ribot on "Attention."

must be guided by spontaneous interest, the sign of his growth. This is why the curriculum is being changed. The educator has grown humble like a true scientist. He no longer has the audacity to quarrel with the laws of nature as in the pre-psychological age.

Suppose the child's brain is seen to organize itself upon another class of facts and formulas than those bearing the educational label of tradition; suppose the wandering currents of energy organize themselves into intricate brain paths best under the stimulus of manual dexterity! The important thing is that that organization take place. This is why the baking of a cake is admitted to equality with a problem in algebra in the educational scheme.

What matter that to you the child's interests are insignificant if they nourish the great forces of will, ambition, and the power of thought in him. A whole field of cabbage plants may be started in window boxes.

No act can be unimportant in the great plan of life, if it serves to nourish ambition, to cultivate mind and a persistent will. Have you never seen a child intent upon his task with a concentration that a financier or a trained scientist might envy? Somebody calls him to do an errand—somebody who does not see that her trivial convenience of

the hour is pitted against the child's future. "Can't I please finish this first," pleads the child. "No," is the reply, "start instantly! Go and do as I say at once." Let the reader not confound the present issue with the problem of obedience, which is discussed elsewhere in this book. It is one thing to know how to put on brakes and reverse levers; it is another thing to acquire the machinery upon which the brakes and levers are used. We are now discussing the latter proposition.

We have stated that men fail because of the lack of strong desires, of a persistent will, of the power to think. The parents who defeat the organic process by which these three things are generated are like the cattle who trample upon and destroy the growing crop that is to be their fodder. The mother who denies stimulus to the growing mind of her child through the activities that interest him, is destroying the very hopes that her heart would fain feed upon when she comes to face with her child his destiny as a man among men. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." That we have begun to question the wanton trampling upon a child's desires, the right of which has been taken as a matter of course, is a sign of dawning knowledge.

When we inquire into the basis of a child's

right to gratify his desires, we find that we must keep distinct and separate at this point, the ethical question of the child's desires as conflicting with the desires of other individuals (which question is also dealt with elsewhere in this volume). We are now dealing with the question of his becoming an individual, with a personality, a mind, a heart, a will. Mere passivity is not unselfishness. Annihilation of individual desires is not altruism. It is only through his own desires and a longing for their gratification that an individual comes to have sympathy with the desires of others. There can be no sacrifice without possession. It is not the poor but the rich who can give. From his wealth of personality your child will some day give back to you and to the world and to God all of the abundant life that you have allowed him, through the happy exercise of his growing instincts. A strong mind that can subject itself to severe training is what we want in the man, a strong will that can stand the discipline of life and conquer obstacles. Wise are the mothers, then, who know how to watch over and not disturb incipient growths. As the gardener cherishes his tender green sprouts, mothers must learn to watch over those tender sprouts of interest in which are bound up feeling, thought and will, and which are to bear on into the great future the potency of

the race, the grandeur of the past. When interest, the desire to learn, has become a strong and vigorous reaction between the mind and its environment it will perpetuate itself because of its own vital momentum. It will detach itself from its earlier objects of interest and absorb its nutriment from others. We recall the picture of a little boy with flushed eager face kneeling in the grass on a Summer day. He was catching grasshoppers and confining them in a cigar box. The alert attitude, the ardent desire and hope in his face, the deep satisfaction depicted upon it as he secured one prize after another as a result of attention and quick movement, all attested the efficacy of the education he had instinctively chosen. And who will say that the ardent desire, the swift execution of purpose was not to be transferable to other things? That little boy will not always be catching grasshoppers. But he who would have had the presumption to call him from his occupation just then, would have stretched a heavy hand across the years and helped to crush ardent hope and faith and self-reliance in an undertaking which he, from his adult standpoint, would consider worthy and desirable achievements.

It is so difficult to get past the snag in our thinking that will not let by the admission that only free self-activity is growth. What is the secret of



the spontaneous action anyway? We have already, in our interpretation of an educational process, gone back to the crude effort which, corrected and disciplined by training, is called art. We have sought to reveal the springs of that effort in the growth of desire and will, the satisfaction of which will give man joy in work.

Let us now say a word about that subtle, indefinable thing, the individual interpretation in art. Its secret is one with the secret of the spontaneous action of the little child. Behind the style of the writer, back of the peculiar and personal charm of the orator, there is a peculiar and differing molecular arrangement in the brain of either. Now the little child who begins with rudimentary structures must build up his brain through his own activities. By forcing him to do one thing rather than another, we must drain off the energy that would have gone to another possible structure or structures, or the beginning of structures, than the one whose building up we had determined. How dare we preside over the very holy of holies of a child's development? In his own interests, when he has a wide choice of interests, is the working out of the resident forces of personality. His choice differs from yours "as one star differeth from another in glory." It is the same subtle non-conformity that maketh the

lily to differ from the rose, that proclaims that the oak is an oak, and not a pine. Surely we are not so enamored of the commonplace that we want to inhibit the charm of individuality, and the mode of expression that conveys it.

It is common for the unsuccessful man to wish himself somewhere else. He blames circumstances for his failure and thinks that could he but journey to another country his success would be assured. Often obstacles rise like a wall before us and seem insurmountable. Suddenly there are no obstacles! We see our way clear to adopt a certain course that brings us the fulfillment of our desires. What has happened? Nothing has changed in our environment. The change is in brain tissue. A current of energy has found its way from active centres through some permeable part of the brain, making active some portion that was hitherto inactive. This concurring activity is what illuminates the situation for us. We have not travelled into another country, as we thought of doing, we have merely travelled into another brain cell, so to speak. The beggar wishes that he might jump over the high wall into the rich man's garden and take possession of his estate. But if the beggar could only jump over into the brain cell, next to the one which lights up the present consciousness of his brain, he might very

soon have for himself houses and lands. Let us thank God that with the quickening of democracy has come the educational ideal that will support our great plan, that will make a true democracy possible. How shall we prevent power and privilege from concentrating in the hands of a few? By allowing every child to grow strong and capable, mentally alert and morally square.

A recent gift of funds makes possible the establishment of a new elementary and high school to be maintained under the direction of the Teachers' College of Columbia University. It is food for speculation upon the ways of destiny, that these funds are part of a great fortune that has come under the designation "predatory wealth." This same fortune, which has been subjected to the whole range of the fire of criticism, implied in that distasteful term, is being used to help agencies whose broad intent is to "equalize opportunity" by making men equal to opportunity.

Mothers, if you think the death angel is abroad in your community in the form of infantile paralysis, no sacrifice is too great for you to make in order that you may secure conditions for the child that will be favorable to the warding off of disease. It is high time that you were made aware of the danger that threatens your child from the repression that may result in mental paralysis. A



little child's brain resembles that of an idiot. The difference is that the normal child's brain is plastic and permeable while the idiot's (if he is the genuine article) is not. He has stumbled, fallen down on the road of his mental development and his body has gone on without his mind. He cannot go back. Nothing can swing open the gates of opportunity for him. He has missed the splendor of the abundant life. For him the lights were never lighted that enable men to see the works of their Creator. Only a poor glimmer of mentality attends him while his body wears itself out on the animal plan. The child may not be caused to stumble at the very rudimentary stages of his growth. Mentality is too strong in the average child to kill easily. Whenever one sees a green vine struggling up through a pile of stones, fairly pushing them out of place, one is reminded of the tenacity and persistence of life. There are degrees of failure for the plant and the man. Much has been made of the survival of the fittest as a law of life, but we no longer believe in leaving our fruits and vegetables to the mercy of that law. Why should we leave our children to its mercy? Why not give the fit every chance to survive? As we let our plants luxuriate in rich soil, why not give our children the chance to taste the fullness of life? The constant movements of

the little body due to an unfailling inner impulse tends to symmetry beyond the power of gymnastics to produce. The shifting attention of the child, keeping his mind active in various and multitudinous directions, indicates the vibrating, pulsating currents of energy that flash and scintillate back and forth through inherited nervous structures. It is like stringing modern cities with electric wires. The more electric wires there are, the more compact and powerful is the thing we call civilization. The more neural connections that are made while the brain is plastic, at the behest of the child's natural impulse to react upon his environment, the richer and fuller will be the abundant life of the child's future.

In the past it has been thought that to bring the child in contact with the materials of growth was to insure growth. One may bring food in contact with the child's stomach by means of a stomach pump and temporarily sustain life, but no one would expect the child to grow until a healthy appetite had been restored. To compel him to read out of books, that which he has no appetite for, and to commit it to memory even, is not to make him assimilate this knowledge. We may go to a bargain counter and buy things just because they are cheap that afterwards prove to be of no use, merely a clutter in the house. Be-

cause verbal memory has offered the cheap and easy appearance of learning, we have cluttered up children's minds with that which in the absence of assimilative power has proved to be a clutter of mental junk. This is what happens to children bundled off to the public school when they should have been playing with their mother's pie tins, or children shut up to complicated and expensive toys when they prefer a stick and a mud puddle. To deny a child the objects of his spontaneous interest may not make an idiot of him. Determination of brain tissue is a matter of more or less. He may stand some day beating with helpless hands against a door of opportunity that can never open for him. There may be despair at that and weeping and gnashing of teeth, but failure will inhere in nothing more or less than his own neural inactivity. Inexorable fate is not in outward circumstances. But in the closed neural tracts, are the closed doors of opportunity. If the doors of contact between the mind and its environment are not opened in childhood the hinges rust. Self activity is the opening of the doors. The number of neural doors that are opened constitute the avenues of abundant life, the opening into rich and satisfying opportunity and success. Please bear in mind that there are more than a million of neural doors to be opened

and there are many more than a million possible reactions or ways in which the incoming energy is made to light up consciousness, in feeling, desire, thought, purpose, will. It reminds one of the statement, "In my father's house are many mansions," when one considers these many chambers of the human brain where the past of our ancestors—their hopes, their struggles, their achievements, are made luminous in the minds of our children.

The child who does not stumble, is the child who goes on from one rich fulfillment of destiny to another, who is allowed to live out his nature at each stage of his development. How does the great giver of life save a grub from being a grub? By making him pass into a butterfly. How shall this age be saved from its materialism to the keen joy of intellectual pleasure? By letting the little child be a materialist when he was meant to develop by means of the material instead of forcing abstract thought upon him. Abstract thought is the synthesis of the child's experience with material things. It is only possible for him to get by this stage by living it out in full experience of sight, sound, taste and touch. The multitudes who are living on the material plane are those who were caused to stumble at that stage of mental development and are there still. There

are men and women who, could they have basked in the warm innocent glow of childish pleasure to the full as children, would now be inclined, as middle aged people, to something besides dancing and dress. Could they have used their feet more and their heads less, as children, they would now be able to use their heads more and their feet less.

A certain lady, alluding to the protest of friends at her husband's absence from certain festivities, and explaining his preference for a quiet evening at home, said: "Of course they cannot understand what fun he has 'just thinking' by himself." Deserving of pity are those who have been caused to stumble before they have reached the place where it is fun "just thinking." Intellectual power is the ripened fruit of sense experience gained in childhood. The multitudes who are dependent upon the motion picture for an idea, are those who are denied a sufficiency of visual and other sense impressions at the proper time. They were denied the full activity which is the alembic for the organic fusion of those impressions, into the stuff of the intellect. And there are these individuals still at the sense stages, with rudimentary mental states and a crude sense of humor, fallen down by the way.

That so many of our young people are leav-

ing school when they should be most eager to continue, that they stand dull and doubtful on the threshold of life drifting into the modern slave markets of the under paid and overworked, that they have no resources within themselves and must resort to the cheapest sensational form of amusements—all this is because the child has been caused to stumble mentally.

Seventy-five million pounds of nitrogen is contained in the air above every acre of clover and yet the crop will die for want of that very element unless each plant develops its own nitrogen-gathering nodes. The more advanced educators see that merely to bring the child in contact with knowledge is not enough—that he must grow his own knowledge-gathering faculties. When parents get the scientific vision also they will see that this means letting him do whatever will keep him mentally alert, mentally keen and eager, mentally strong and determined. The child who does not stumble mentally is the man who will win out in his life struggle.

### III

#### THE CHILD MUST NOT STUMBLE MORALLY

*"The Christ Child comes with soft warm feet  
To tread earth's paths and make them sweet."*

*"Bless his little heart, this white soul that has won the  
kiss of heaven for our earth.*

*He loves the light of the sun, he loves the sight of his  
mother's face.*

*He has not learned to despise the dust and hanker after  
gold.*

*Clasp him to your heart and bless him.*

*He has come into this land of an hundred cross-roads.*

*I know not how he chose you from the crowd, came to  
your door, and grasped your hand to ask his way.*

*He will follow you laughing and talking, and not a  
doubt in his heart.*

*Keep his trust, lead him straight and bless him."*

TAGORE.

WHY is it that the most unique and significant feature in the circumstances that make up the scene in which little children figured with Christ and his disciples is almost never emphasized and pointed out? He did not do and say what we would most likely have done and said upon such an occasion. He did not say to the children, "Now

children, here are these good men, Peter and James and John; you must see to it that you grow up to be good men like them." We are always saying to children, "I do hope you'll be like Uncle Charles or like good Mr. So-and-So." Christ appeared to be perfectly satisfied with the children. He said to his disciples, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

There is singular beauty in the conception of little children as representing the kingdom. The child is life perpetuated. No matter how faded, jaded and worn out in body and mind humanity becomes, there emerges ever a new generation, fresh in primal sweetness, ready in the sensitiveness of its plastic tissue for the new impress of the ideals of its day and generation. In the child, humanity has its chance over again. Its feet are set once more in the path of progress. Death is humanity's means of purging itself of its dross and its poisons. The passing generation is the shuffling off of worn out prejudices, getting rid of the effete matter of over-specialized tendencies,—abnormal growth of opinions unsuited to the day.

The new generation starts out unburdened and light, its face set toward the open road. We must not cause it to stumble,—in other words



we must not destroy the child's sweet unconsciousness of self, his unbiased outlook upon the world, his impersonal satisfaction in results, his grace of acquiescence and spirit of co-operation; all of which are sufficient for the realization of the hopes of humanity, for the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

Let us consider the little child before we have made him disagreeable and overbearing and self-conscious and deceitful and rebellious. How shall we cause him *not* to stumble in his moral development?

The answer is as before,—by giving him freedom and protection and letting him grow his moral stature. We cannot add one cubit to this stature or make one hair black or white. We cannot think his thoughts for him. We cannot feel his desires for him. We cannot discipline his will for him. In his recapitulation of the moral struggles and triumph of the race, otherwise in his journey of life, the child's progress depends upon profound changes in organic tissue and must be guarded as jealously as any other growth.

"But," says some one, "how is your elaborate formula for letting the child do as he pleases going to work out here? How are you going to train a child to live in a social organization

by letting him do as he pleases? He cannot continue to do as he pleases when he gets out into the world."

Why cannot he do as he pleases? If he pleases to do right, may he not have the privilege still, when he goes out as a member of society, to do as he pleases?

*And it is our business to see that the child so develops that when he does go forth from us, he will please to do right.*

The theory of utmost freedom for the child and the theory of the strictest determinism of his essential character are not incompatible. Freedom relates to his growth, an inner process which we must not violate; determinism relates to his environment, the circumstances of which should be controlled.

In a remote neighborhood of the south, where people did not trouble much about conveniences of any kind, a more than ordinarily progressive farmer sought to introduce milking stools. Upon his return from the pasture, looking much battered up and disturbed and moreover without any milk in the pail, a hired man was asked by the farmer what success he had had with the new milking stool. He replied that "the blamed thing looked all right but the old cow wouldn't sit down on it."

If there are those who have had trouble with the principle of freedom for the child it is because they have not known how to apply that principle. It is the free child in the right environment that grows morally straight and strong as a young sapling. The child must have freedom of choice and action, but we limit his choices to good choices by eliminating base and sensual influences from his environment. We have reached a racial crisis where certain crude experiments in evil are more costly than ever. The delicate high strung twentieth century nervous system can ill afford such crude experiments.

It is the business of the generation preceding to inhibit in the new generation what has been found unfavorable to the life of the race. There is no difference of opinion concerning the anti-racial and anti-social effects of drunkenness and licentiousness, of dishonesty and injustice. That these things continue to distress and to threaten the survival of the race proves that we have not learned to fulfil our trust as parents and teachers, since these vices are all the signs of defeated progress and arrested development.

The unhindered child takes his cue from his environment, and it is his *incorrigible, inevitable, irrevocable, irretrievable disposition* to imitate. That fact comes to the rescue of the conserva-

tive educators who tremble for classical learning and academic courses in the new scheme of education. It is always possible for those whose most cherished prerogative is to dictate the educational content, to insure that content by surrounding the child with teachers who have a sincere respect for the customs, traditions, the history, and the languages of the mighty past. The child of the present inherits the original nervous structures upon which such learning is based. It but remains for environment to touch the button and accomplishment springs into being. That is, if we do not bunglingly thrust in force and stop the wheels of the natural process of imitation. The child must be turned loose with examples. Always there must be present the factor of freedom to uphold our doctrine of necessity. The child whose grown up associates speak the language with ease and grace in conversation and charming narration, becomes a fine linguist even if he never studies grammar. If example is a loving influence rather than a grindstone to which his nose is held, it is the more sure of imitation.

The way to control the child effectually, is to work with untiring zeal to bring his environment under subjection. When he was a little baby, you placed before him the things that were good for him, so that he grew to like wholesome food

without any conscious curtailment of his liberty. He didn't know enough to cry for candy because he had never had it. Continue to habituate him to the pure and simple life and he takes it for granted.

Keep him from the overstimulation of crowds and the notice of strangers and he retains the natural shyness of childhood. He never dreams of taking the liberties by which smart self-conscious youngsters have brought odium upon the modern doctrine of the "free child." This unfortunate child's environment has provided him with the things that should have been denied him and denied him the things in which he should have been indulged. No wonder that he has wrong desires and is disagreeable and troublesome.

The child is not born with manners any more than he is born with clothes. He is as defenceless also in his choice of habits as he is in his choice of garments. As a matter of fact, he can choose neither. He must wear the clothes that are put upon his little body. He must speak the language that is spoken to him. He must learn to act as the people with whom he lives act before him.

To transfer the energy we have spent pruning and prodding at the child, to the shaping of

the environment that is to form that mold of his sensitive spirit (which grows more perilously mobile with each generation) is surely the part of wisdom. If the figure of birth brings its true meaning to us, emphasis must be put upon the change of environment. There is no change in the organism of the new creature, only the functioning of powers hitherto latent.

Our little child is the child of the past,—the child of the brute and the savage and of all primitive humanity,—but he is also the child of love and faith and sacrifice and triumph. There are in him transient and permanent tendencies growing side by side like the blossoms and fruit on the same orange tree. The same cherishing soil and climate that hastens the perfection of the fruit will attend to the death of the blossoms. The love and foresight that provides and controls the conditions which promote the growth of the permanent in the child will also terminate the transient stages of development.

We need not worry because our little child is a savage at some stage of his career unless we by our brutality to him are causing him to fall down at this stage.\* For it is our brutality or the

\* The writer is using here the concept of recapitulation, chiefly because it has grown familiar to the popular mind.

We are aware that the trend of opinion is against paralleling ontogenetic to phylogenetic development in orderly correspond-

brutality in his environment that will cause him to stumble here. If people about him are gentle and generous, kind and unselfish to him, it is only a matter of time when he will become gentle and generous, kind and unselfish to others. The suggestion of example is a seed that brings forth a hundred fold. A good healthy fight with his playmates (contemporaries of the Norman period) will not make or keep the child brutal, but when his parents fight with him it does both.

Environment determines what shall remain permanent of the partly developed and transient instincts that accompany rapid growth and are reminiscent of the past stages which they represent.

"They were not cruel," says that wise and loving interpreter of boys, Booth Tarkington, concerning Penrod and Sam when they chased old Whitey, "they were simply historic."

After some rather unbecoming expressions of difference of opinion and refusal of cooperation for his own good, a mother said to her small offspring, "What would you do if you were grown

ence. But it is generally conceded that there are typical stages of development in child life, and types of reaction, characteristic of these stages, which may be duplicated in savage and animal life. We are only concerned with the argument that these stages, however and whenever they occur in the child, being transitional, need not cause anxiety, unless the undesirable reactions are being fixed by an unfavorable environment.

up and had a little boy who acted this way?" Quick as a flash came the answer, "I would spank him." "And that is just the reason I am not going to spank you. I do not want you to spank your little boy," said the mother.

The child may be prone to respect brute force at a certain stage, but do you want him to continue to do so? Of all calamities would that not be the worst? He is the man who will pass on not only the rod to his own flesh but the sword to mankind. Let us repeat with emphasis,—it is not serious that a child must go through the stage of reliance upon brute force any more than in his mental development he goes through the materialistic stage. It is tragic if he remains in either.

One day we had suddenly thrust upon us the question, "Say, can God skin the world?" Taken by surprise, we hesitated. We knew that the question was suggested by the sight of hunters skinning the wild animals shot in the mountains where we lived. Again came the question, shrill, insistent, "You said God could do anything,—Can he skin the world?" We knew that the prowess of the Almighty was in jeopardy and must be vindicated, and so we answered, "Yes, He could."

We want this child to grow up, however, with



the realization that the height of God's glory consists not in his power to destroy but in his power to save. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life." But he will only come to see it and feel it through the experience of human love untinged with caprice and vengeance, anger and hate.

To punish a child for his brutal instincts by being brutal to him is only to fasten them upon him. How shall we save our children from the undesirable stages of existence through which they pass? By simply letting them pass out and into the next stages. Let us bear in mind that the environmental conditions that nourish the permanent traits of sympathy and kindness hasten the death of the transient traits of brutality and respect for force. The little child's milk teeth are not adequate for life use, but we do not pull them out on that account. The growth of the superior, stronger and permanent ones will cause them to loosen and come out. It is in the effort to force the child from the weaker and more transient stage that in every instance will defeat the full and rich maturing of the succeeding and permanent stage.

"Be a man,—don't cry," urges the mother to a

poor whining little piece of humanity. To be forever hushing him up when he has a right to good lusty cries, to impose restraint upon him when he has a right to give vent to baby feelings—with plenty of babying and cuddling thrown in—is to keep him a baby and make him a whiner long after self-control should characterize his actions. There is nothing for making good hard fiber in the boy or man, like letting the baby be a baby while he is a baby. Let the child live at each stage the life peculiar to it, that when his development is completed he may not only be good, but good for something through the vigor and symmetry and poise of a full life. And if these transient stages are sometimes trying, let us remember how *very* transient they are. It is like sitting by little graves, to look back and remember what our children were and are. First there was the soft rose leaf skin, then lovely white curves of face and form, clinging arms and faltering steps. And one day after succeeding transformations, a little lad with firm muscle and quickened pace fares forth to school. This day is a precursor of the day swiftly approaching when he will go forth again to belong henceforth more to the world than to his home.

“He satisfieth the desire of every living thing.”  
Let the real needs of a childish nature be satis-

fied as he passes through the separate phases of childhood. He passes swiftly and can never turn back to let us atone to him for neglect.

There was a little boy who liked to play with grasshoppers rather than read in books. He had many other queer little ways. He loved certain little trousers that had been made out of an old pair of his brother's and sewed together wrong so that one leg seemed to be going and one leg coming. They were also much the worse for having slid down many banisters, but the little boy preferred those trousers to all others and better ones. This little boy had meddling fingers too that gave other people trouble. Whenever he saw a plate of cookies with raisins in them he always wanted to dig out the raisins, which left little holes in the middle. He had very decided aversions, and one of them was going away from home and staying in other people's houses for any length of time. One day when his mother was visiting with him and in very deep conversation, the little boy lay down upon the floor and kicked it very hard while he yelled with equal vigor, "I don't like this darned old house,—I want to go home." He hated water also, after the manner of all small boys when it has to be applied externally.

It is confidentially asserted now that this same

small boy has long since ceased to catch grasshoppers, but that he catches ideas with great avidity. There are now no meddling fingers in that home (the two lonely inmates wish there were), but the son of the house has perfect table manners. He is a connoisseur in the matter of clothes, also, and there are those who affirm that the little worn out, much loved trousers of other days contributed to the good taste of his present apparel. He felt so comfortable and presentable in them,—thus was cultivated the desire to continue to be comfortable and presentable. Though a man's standards and a little boy's differ, the underlying principle in dress is the same. He has long since made his bow to conventionality, also,—this little boy who kicked and screamed in the strange house—and he only says polite and agreeable things even though he is himself uncomfortably awaiting the convenience of other people. While he has made such large concessions to cleanliness as to amount to fastidiousness itself yet he is actually the same person who used to declare frantically that "ears don't matter, Mamma." Nor would they have mattered in the way he meant, when it came to the respect of his little clan, the only place where public opinion mattered to him. As for chivalry, it is said to have found its finest flower in this former tormentor of small girls,

—for once when he was asked, in desperation, *why* he tormented his little neighbor so unrelentingly, he replied with great satisfaction, “Cause I just love the screamings of Ruth!”

It is self evident that all children outgrow childish ways.

“What is there new in these reflections?” says the reader. “When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man I put away childish things.”

The apostle was trying to make it plain that with childish ideas and childish actions, primitive and childish feelings should also be put aside. It would be so, indeed, if we ourselves did not harbor these feelings toward the child and so make abortive the plan of his moral growth. The grub was never allowed to spread its wings but was fastened to the wall with a pin stuck through it. In the soul of the average man and woman, we find childish passions in a state of fatal arrest, having been jabbed through and transfixed by the treatment of older people.

Listen, Mothers. We older mothers had with us a little being of whom Jesus said, “His angel doth always behold the face of my Father who is in Heaven.” We had him with us by the fireside, we had him in our arms, we led him by

the hand in fields and lanes as we both went down the road of life together. Are the wrongs we have done him forgiven and forgotten? Yes,—but our greatest punishment lies in the fact that we hear him repeating those mistakes and calling them right.

We heard a harsh cold man boast of his bringing up in the following language: "There was no modern foolishness about my mother; when she said, let things alone, I let things alone and when she said do a thing, I did it." And his whole manner and personality expressed more emphatically than words the means by which this discipline had been brought about. Creditors, employees, business associates, all trembled before the arbitrary will and mercilous disposition of the man.

It is not necessary to be a tyrant or to make a tyrant in order to teach obedience, but this man was "held up" at the stage in his development when he knew no better than to respect brute force and he had never gotten beyond it. He was still on the same plane with the little boy who had to be told that God could "skin the world" in order that the power of the Almighty be vindicated to him. Alas for those who grow up to believe that the power of righteousness is in armies and arbitrary force. The whole world

has been halted in its progress because the child has been made to stumble at the brute stage.

A mother was meant to be the love of God made visible and tangible. She it is who may demonstrate if she will the truth of that saying, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." Really all we are contending for, is that Christianity be taken literally in our treatment of children, however impractical it may still be held to be for adults.

A man was seen to beat with pitiless fury a pair of struggling horses who were unable to draw a heavy load he had put behind them. An old gray haired woman came out of the farmhouse and begged him to stop. It was pathetic to see her, so powerless before the anger of her son; and it was not less pitiful to see him having a brain storm that would not have been serious in a little child. Little children are delicate nervous mechanisms ill adjusted to their environments as yet. That a molecular tension breaks, that energy, losing its way in the little brain where paths are but dimly marked out at best, bursts out in hysterics, is not serious in the child. That he kicks and screams and strikes at whoever comes to undress him when he has been allowed to get too tired at night is not serious in its portent for the future, unless he is spanked at this

time to teach him self control. Then he is made to stumble at the stage in his career which perhaps more than all others he should be allowed to get by. Remember, that anger is in all truth a brain storm. It is insanity in child or man. A million volts of energy rage through the nervous system, literally tearing it to pieces. It is at this crisis that this peculiar kind of weakness in a child needs to be cared for by a sure calm strength. Just as the blacksmith's iron receives an impress when it is red hot because all its molecules are in motion, the little child's nervous system receives an indelible impress from whatever happens to him when he is angry. The chance is here to change or to fix the course of character. He is all plasticity. The mother who gathers into loving arms the quivering shaken little form at such a time (and if she is strong enough to whip him, she is strong enough to hold and calm him), or, if it seems best, quietly ignores the storm until it has passed,—she is the mother who is teaching him self control. It is not how the child acts when he is going through these super-sensitive periods of growth, but how others act towards him, that will most largely determine the way he reacts to like situations in after years. The subconscious image of a sweet and patient mother has made the strong, masterful, self con-



trolled man. He it is who has gotten safely past a very critical stage in his career, who has not been made to stumble and stay at the place of weakness and humiliation (shame upon those who would have made him do it!) but who goes on from strength to strength, from victory to victory.

Nearly all self justification for offences against "one of these little ones" centers about the vexing problem of obedience which we discuss in another chapter. But let us repeat most emphatically that children should be taught to obey without having built into the constitution of their minds stumbling blocks to character. Modern efficiency demands a maximum of desirable with a minimum of undesirable results in any field of endeavor. Shall parents and teachers be exempt from this demand in that most important field of character building? Children should be taught to "mind," then, if it must be repeated at intervals like an invocation to invoke the vindication of the good intentions of parents, but let the process of teaching be free from objectionable features. Let us not, in doing a little good, do a greater harm.

"There is no creature on earth of whom obedience is not required, none whom it does not grace, none whom it does not inform with a

majesty of contentment which nothing else can give."

A child is born, we have said, with the grace of acquiescence. How ready to help you is the little smiling child! How ready to agree with you! How ready to run at your suggestion, before he is made stubborn and rebellious by the failure of others to recognise the limitations of this willing mood. Just as he has not reserves of physical endurance so that his strength is quickly exhausted, power of adaptation in any direction is quickly exhausted. But when the strength is present, exercise it. Pick the sweet peas when they are ready and there will be more of them.

A father and a child trudged to the garden side by side. The little one carried the hoe and exclaimed joyfully, "Now this time I'll be the digger up and you be the putter in." The father wanted it to be the other way around but he thought of the factors of the situation and their relative importance. It was not to matter ten years from then whether he was hindered that morning and the potatoes chopped into bits by the hoe in the child's inexperienced effort to remove them from the soil. It would matter though, whether this frame of mind was present ten years hence. The disposition to help was to

be the permanent factor; the unskillful strokes was the transient factor and might be ignored, as they were.

The will to cooperate does not grow, like the horns of cattle, protruding into the realm of action. It grows incorporated in the act by which it expresses itself. The act that nourishes it falls away like a husk and other expressions are assumed, but one must not disturb the tender growth of character that is involved in its covering, however useless these outward acts may otherwise be. So we should always be on the watch for what the child wants to do for us, rather than what *we* want him to do for us, because in his own voluntary acts of devotion and service are contained the very soul of that service. To bring you an old vile smelling weed may be to him the offering of the sweet incense of his whole soul.

To tax the willing mood and to insist upon performance when the will to do is not present, is to generate stubbornness which does not exist in the child except as inability for quick adaptation. For instance, when a child is urged to say "please" and "thank you" and he hesitates, it is usually before strangers and he is confused or, as is most probably the case, two opposite suggestions appeal to him and neutralize each other. There is the inclination to imitate the courteous

and kindly act that the phrase calls up, and the equal inclination to imitate the arbitrary and dictatorial manner in which the speaker urges compliance to his command. So the nervous system of the child simply stands still on the tracks. One way the colt is taught to balk is by giving it too heavy a load to draw.

The very young child should not be expected to act under a direct command abruptly given until he has had sufficient training to fix the habit. A sudden demand for independent action is often paralyzing. The perversity of a child is not a serious thing,—it is but one of the many signs of his weakness—but this perversity cultivated and intensified in the man is a *most serious thing*. How many people there are who imagine they have strong wills who have no wills at all in the sense that the will should be flexible, sometimes yielding, sometimes resisting, but always holding a constant purpose in view. Indeed the average person is an obstructionist. He is mostly intent on showing you why a thing isn't so, why it can't be done, etc. He has a negative rather than a positive view of life.

A little child's will is the will to go forward not the will to stand still. There are two ways in which we should exercise special caution in keeping out of the child's way in this matter of

his will. If we would preserve in him the will to go forward rather than to stand still, and his beautiful spirit of cooperation, we must not cause him to stumble with our criticism and we must reciprocate his spirit of cooperation.

In finding fault with a child, we rob him of the impersonal joy of effort and center his attention upon himself. When a child has broken a dish or spilled the milk that he has been carrying, ninety-nine times out of a hundred he will regret his mistake and determine upon more excellent performance next time. That is, if he has never been scolded or in fear of scolding. If he is scolded he will begin to make excuses for his fault,—the dish was already cracked or the milk pail was too full. A thrust of fault finding always diverts the energy of the mind away from the excellence of performance, where it should be centered in all effort, and turns it inward upon its own self-justification. There are children so habituated to making mistakes and thus defending themselves, that it would seem as if they had left off trying to correct certain faulty actions, that they have abandoned all idea of objective excellence which is so natural to a little child—the doing of things well, just like mamma. They have been robbed not only of the impersonal joy of effort but of that alertness

of imitation by which they would have perfected their efforts. No one who has been acquainted with one of these children who is always making excuses need be told how disagreeable he may become and when a child has been worked into such a state of mind no one realizes what a wrong has been done him. His elders think that the grievance is theirs. A joy rider was asked if he would not feel very badly should he happen to run over and kill a man in his reckless driving.

"Yes," was the reply, "sure I would,—especially if it was a big man. I'd get quite a jolt."

The child who is thrown continually on the defensive has a grievance that far outweighs the merits and demerits of any single act. There is being cultivated in him an attitude toward life that is most anti-social. It is at the bottom of suspicion and morbid self-consciousness. It is the prototype of that false "honor," which is as a chip on the shoulder of nations, because sooner or later personal antagonism is added to suspicion and self-consciousness, and then is laid the foundation of all that strife among men, the energy of which if directed to secure the common good would in our generation bring about the ideal state. Men might join forces for mutual welfare and fight the sources of disease and vice and crime in their environment instead of each other,

if when children they were not imbued with personal antagonism as a subconscious attitude of mind.

One has only to witness the phenomenal progress of a child, who is never criticised, in resourcefulness, in intelligent adaptation to environment and the spirit of helpfulness to realize what such freedom may mean in the long run to permanent outcome of character. He is the child who does not stumble.

Not the least of our dangerous tampering with the child's personality in the name of discipline is unduly arousing his sympathies in order to secure "obedience." One of two evil results invariably follows this course. We produce an abnormal strain upon the child's emotional nature or we harden it to all appeals. A funny newspaper story has been going the rounds illustrating the latter condition.

A little boy was appealed to after this fashion.

"Dear," said his mother, "won't you run upstairs and get little sister's nightgown?"

"I don't want to," was the reply.

"Poor little sister, naughty brother won't get her nightgown. If we don't be good to dear little baby sister, the angels will give her wings again and she'll fly back to heaven. Then we won't have little baby sister any more."

"Well," stoutly maintained "naughty" brother, "if she can get wings to fly back to heaven with, she can get wings to fly upstairs and get her night-gown."

The writer once yielded to the cheap and sordid impulse to work upon a child's sympathies. With a semi-tearful voice she said, "Mother is so tired, won't you do this," etc. The experiment was tried on virgin soil and the reaction was so intense as to prevent even the required act. The child broke out into a passion of grief and was so prostrated that he could not collect his faculties enough to remember what it was he was asked to do. We then realized once for all the wrong of invading the realm of the child's emotion for a trivial end. Let right habits grow,—and it is our lookout that they do. If we are not too ignorant and lazy the child may be trained to act under direction, and such training implies a neutral mechanism, just as being trained to play the piano does. But do not resort to emotional appeal. The child's emotions are the holy of holies of personality. We must not rudely, wantonly, stimulate them. It is our business to build up right habits. His sympathies will emerge warm and strong and ardent, and will energize these habits of service and obedience, of work and of choice. To let the child remain whole hearted



and sincere is to make truth and justice prevail in the earth.

The child's mind naturally tends to organize itself according to law. We must not cause him to stumble at the outset of this formative process by making him rebellious or by robbing him of the one element that gives moral value to obedience,—his own independent choice. It is quite right to help him to invade this realm of law and obedience by attaching certain privileges to self control, by making gratification of desire contingent upon stipulated conditions.

A child who loves to get little scraps of dough on baking day to make into small cakes and pies of her own was told that she must save these confections until dinner time, as she was never allowed to eat between meals. It was explained to her that since she was quite a little girl (the tone did *not* imply reproach for being little) and might find it hard not to taste the goodies when they were still before her, they better be put on a very high shelf out of her reach, as mother had always done before so as not to tempt her. But she said, "I am big enough now so that I could let them alone." And she proved that she was. When self-control meant prestige and opportunity she could exercise it.

A far greater value however is the self-control

that is enjoined by the child himself in a situation that he has created. We entered a home and a little girl of five met us on tip-toe and with fingers upon her lips motioned us to silence, pointing to her dolly lying in its carriage. Her baby was asleep and must not be wakened. For more than half an hour she imposed this restraint of silence upon her noisy little self while she played mother to the dolly. This sort of self-control is to that imposed from without, what the living blossom is to the artificial one. In appearance they may be the same, but one is a manufactured thing. If you have another like it you must make it yourself, while of the living blossom we may predict many more from the same rhizome.

Always remember that it is the child's own will, not yours, that must function in him to the strengthening of character. Even in those instances when you are obliged to insist upon a stated act that must be carried out definitely at once, if it is against the child's desire, try to save to him a self-respecting choice by suggesting an alternative in the *way* it is done. For instance:

"Will you wash your hands here in the kitchen, or up in the bathroom?"

Instead of breaking his will (we might better break his leg for the greatest tragedy of life is the broken will) we should make the occasions

for interfering with it as few as possible. In those circumstances in which you scent possible friction, leave him independent choice as much as possible. It is only through the will that wealth of personality and genius, ability little or much, can be given to the world.

The unconditional freedom of the child merging into the freedom conditioned upon his own self-control constitutes the normal development of the child into a law abiding citizen. To let him achieve this freedom in conformity, is to watch the triumphant course of a child's natural development.

If we do not weaken his moral strength by overloading it, if we do not brutalize him by crushing his eager will, if we do not cause him to stumble and stay at rudimentary stages, we shall see him constantly growing in all spiritual grace and responsiveness. And the Perfect One Who commanded us not to cause the child to stumble waits for him at the end of his journey.

INFORMING THE SUBCONSCIOUSNESS,  
OR, HELPING THE CHILD TO PACK FOR  
HIS LIFE JOURNEY

*"There was a child went forth every day,  
And the first object he looked upon, that object he be-  
came;  
And that object became part of him for the day, or a  
certain part of the day, or for many years, or  
stretching cycles of years.*

*The early lilacs became part of this child,  
The grass, and white and red morning-glories, and white  
and red clover, and the song of the phoebe-bird . . .  
And the school-mistress that passed on her way to the  
school,  
And the friendly boys that pass'd—and the quarrelsome  
boys,  
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls—and the barefoot  
negro boy and girl,  
And all the changes of city and country, wherever he  
went.  
His own parents! . . .*

*The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the  
supper table;  
The mother with mild words—clean her cap and gown,  
a wholesome odor falling off her person and clothes  
as she walks by;  
The father strong, self-sufficient, manly mean, anger'd,  
unjust;*

90     *The Child that Does Not Stumble*

*The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the  
crafty lure,  
The family usages, the language, the company, the furni-  
ture—the yearning and the swelling heart,  
Affection that will not be gainsay'd—the sense of what  
is real—the thought if after all it should prove un-  
real,  
The doubts of daytime and the doubts of night-time—the  
curious whether and how,  
Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes  
and specks? . . .*

*These became part of that child who went forth every  
day, and who now goes, and will always go forth  
every day."*

WALT WHITMAN.

*"Why are those tears always in your eyes, my child?  
How horrid of them to be always scolding you for noth-  
ing!  
You have stained your fingers and face with ink while  
writing,—is that why they call you dirty?  
O, fie! Would they dare to call the full moon dirty  
because it had smudged its face with ink?  
For every little trifle they blame you, my child. They  
are ready to find fault for nothing.  
You tore your clothes while playing,—is that why they  
call you untidy?  
O, fie! What would they call an autumn morning that  
smiled through its ragged clouds?  
Take no heed what they say to you, my child. They  
make a long list of your misdeeds.  
Everybody knows how you love sweet things,—is that  
why they call you greedy?  
O, fie! What then would they call us who love you?*

TAGORE.

WHEN the children are to go on a vacation trip or for a visit, when they are to go to boarding school or to college, how we work to get them ready! There must be changes of underwear and suitable clothing for all occasions. No effort is spared to provide the useful, the durable, and all proper articles for the journey and the stay away from us.

How far the children must wander from us on their life journey! To store their minds with impressions that will be useful to them, that will not be found wanting when compared with the best standards of their day and generation, is like packing their trunks for the other and lesser journeys.

Conduct has been thought of as the result of reasoning about the right and wrong of things. There is little conduct that can lay claim to such distinction.

"Why does he do so-and-so?" We say: "He knows better," or "I am surprised at Mr. B's action on such and such occasion; I did not think it was in him."

We are constantly surprising ourselves as well as being surprised in this respect, because as a matter of fact we do not act reasonably, that is, in a manner that can be predicted from a knowledge of our accepted standards. The

springs of action are hidden away in deep recesses of being. We do not know what they are until conduct reveals them to us, but they are found to be one with the submerged impressions that our own conduct or the conduct of others have left upon us. Our motives are rooted in the dim and misty past. Even reason itself has its origin in the warm and fertile soil of early sensations. A baby's clinging contact with its mother's form—the sense of protection and support gained thus—may be the basis of the man's faith in the Everlasting Arms.

Lest our continued plea for the greater freedom of the child may savor of chance to those accustomed to think of training and preparation in a certain way, we repeat that it is the duty of the parents to seal the fate of their child by means of another kind of training and preparation. He should be so bound to certain courses of thought and action that they will be as inevitable to him as the beating of his heart. We should pack his trunk for his life journey with such thought and care that he will have only the useful and beautiful from which to draw. In other words, impart to him the suggestions from which only right actions can emerge.

Whether we have done it intelligently or blindly, whether for better or for worse, it is

certain that the subconsciousness that we have built up in babyhood will color and influence, in part at least, the whole life. A piece of old-time admonition to a young woman contemplating matrimony was to the effect that if she could find out how the prospective husband treated his mother she would know how he would probably treat herself. It would be more to the point, however, if she knew how the mother treated her son from the time he was born,—and before.

The child is not allowed a separate physical existence for some time after life has actually begun. Nature has decreed that he shall live in his mother's body, and that she shall impart her vitality to him. Also, it is a long time after the child is born before he enters into a separate mental or spiritual existence. As the mother gave her body to nourish and cherish his body, so now she must give her spirit to nourish and cherish his. The nervous system is getting its strongest impressions during those months and years before its own organized reactions present more or less interference with new suggestions.

The adage, "Make hay while the sun shines," could not be more pertinent to any situation, nor could it be applied to one involving more tremendous issues. Yet there are mothers who think they can employ their time more profitably than



by associating with their own babies. They will define a "good baby" as one who is "no trouble in the house." He will let his mother sew, play cards, wash dishes, go to the missionary meeting, write papers for her club, or do whatever her inclination or sense of duty impels her to do, other than the very negligible task of living with her baby.

"You wouldn't know there was a baby in the house," triumphantly exclaimed one mother who was describing how her baby had been trained to obliterate himself. She explained that when he had cried to be taken up, he was simply left to "cry it out." When he was known to be dry and warm, and it was not time to feed him, he was ignored entirely. Sometimes at first he would be hours crying himself to sleep, but he finally learned that his mother would not give in to him when "he only wanted to be tended." One wonders if Mary of Nazareth had anything more important to do than to tend the child Jesus. But then, of course, she didn't know that it was unhealthy to kiss babies and bad to handle them.

There are many good rules that may lead to disaster when followed under all circumstances. For instance, a man had been drowned. Two neighbors were discussing the tragedy and one said to the other, "I thought Smith could swim."

“So he could,” was the reply, “and he did swim for awhile, but the five-o’clock whistle blew and he had to quit. He is a Union man, you know.”

It is extremely important that a baby be protected from callers and members of the family who only want to gratify and amuse themselves with it; and above all, it should be protected from over stimulation of dangling objects and constant noises made to attract its attention. But we are talking now of the baby who wants to be held in the arms of his clean and healthy mother, and the values she may be refusing him by turning a deaf ear to his cries.

“He only wants to be tended,” she says. Well, what does that mean to the baby? He knows only a world of sensations in which nothing is distinct and constant but his mother’s soft touch, her warm caress, the feeling of her cheek against his. He knows only a blur of sights out of which there emerges at intervals a familiar one. He may not know it as his mother’s face, but it is infinitely comforting. Amid the confusion of sounds, there remains one constant unchanged sound,—his mother’s voice. Her presence represents the stable and the permanent in a strange, changing world. It makes this little, lonely scrap of humanity feel very secure and comforted to have that presence possess him. He cries to

it and for it. He has no language but a cry. He is heard but is not answered. He asks for something very precious but is denied. Moreover, his mother deliberately plans to defeat him to the extent that he will take defeat for granted. Defeat is registered on sensitive brain cells. .

Perhaps this child will go through life nerveless and trivial, content to do without the best things. Perhaps his mother will sometimes reproach him for his lack of faith. Will she remember that he prayed, once, to the only power he knew, for the best thing he was capable of wanting, in the only way that he was capable of asking,—and was denied, defeated? A smiling cynicism answers the mother's pleading that he seek other than material good. Did she not argue, once, that he was warm and well fed and that was all he needed?

There is reason to believe that the man's philosophy of life, his faith in the Eternal Goodness, the constancy of affection, the full swing of hope and courage depend upon experiences that the individual seldom remembers. What can compare with the opportunity to bestow this enrichment of life?

The first few years of life when the child does not know himself as a separate individual, when he refers to himself as "Baby" or "Charlie," is

the time of greatest receptivity. This period is so swift in passing that even were it not fraught with such infinite possibilities to the child, the mother needs all its memories to feed her lonely heart upon in years to come. It is a pity that the black shadow of prejudices that have been dislodged in all our theories of other human relations should come to haunt, and darken, and poison the relation of mother and child. It is now that babyhood is all sweetness. It is now that the mother should be all overshadowing love.

In order that every moment of the time may be consecrated to eternal destinies, the mother must rid herself of the mistake that the baby can do anything for which he deserves to be punished.

Said a little boy with that profound instinct for reality so often revealed in the questions of children, and which it is the function of psychology to investigate, "Do dogs think they are going to bark just before they do it?" It has been pretty well demonstrated that dogs do not premeditate upon a bark, neither do children resolve upon the many acts which they perform detrimental to the convenience of their elders and often to their own welfare. Those who have seen a year old baby sneeze and then look about as though searching for the origin of the sound,

have had a demonstration of a mental happening, the various graduations of which explain a child's actions up to three or four years old. The baby was conscious that something had happened after he had sneezed—but he is so far from realizing himself as the cause of happenings, that he looks to see from whence the sound did proceed. And long after he becomes conscious of himself as sneezing,—when he comes to know that things happen in him and by means of him as well as around him,—he still does not distinguish between the things that he does and the things that just do themselves, apparently. They all alike partake, to him, of the quality of the unexpected. When his muscles have responded a little better than usual to impinging stimuli and he has climbed upon a chair or thrown a ball for the first time, *his surprise is only equaled by his delight.*

As he flourishes a stick with which he has been playing, he happens to hit his mother in the face. He has never done it before. He did not know that he was going to do it now. The mother pretends to cry and the baby cries, too. The mother imagines that he is sorry for what he has done. She is reading into the situation a fully evolved process of which the child is not capable. What he is capable of is quick response to the mood and feeling of another. He cries because

he sees his mother cry. Just as his smiles at two and three months came in response to her smiles, his grief arises now in response to her grief.

One meets mothers every day who not only posit reason and imagination, but a highly cultivated moral sense, to account for the actions of babies. One mother declared that her child had an inherent sense of right and wrong sufficient to guide her on all occasions. She said she whipped this little girl for running away, and the child afterward came and placed her cheek against her mother's, saying, "Naughty baby to run away,—must be whipped." This to the mother was proof of the child's "inherent sense of right and wrong." Had she been whipped for standing her Teddy Bear upon its head, she would have acquiesced as impartially in the justice of her chastisement. Would this have proven the inherent wrong of standing Teddy Bears upon their heads?

This child has merely repeated her mother's words, as she will probably imitate her mother's act of cruelty against herself. And so we continue to brand humanity with the mark of Cain during that period which was given us to ground the soul in the consciousness of never-failing love and sympathy. The world is in need of a type



of mind that is capable of believing literally in a God who sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust, of exhibiting as a matter of course, the charity that suffereth long and is kind. Civilization is ripe for an understanding of the prayer of One who could say while suffering wrong, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Most discipline consists in infinitely painful attempts to lock the barn after the horse is stolen. The child is punished for his disobedience when he should never have been allowed to become disobedient. He is made to suffer for his naughtiness when the naughtiness should have been prevented.

The child's nervous system is taking on impressions which are to serve as patterns for future actions. Out of his unconscious and semi-conscious activity there emerges conscious activity. Those of his own acts of which we make him conscious, he is likely to repeat. Praise or blame will fix this consciousness equally well. The surest way to inhibit the accidental and undesirable acts is to ignore them and to so manipulate circumstance as to prevent their recurrence; as putting away objects that will not bear handling, or fencing in the yard from which he runs away. Take care that the will grows, not through dis-

obedience, but always through obedience. Of the thousand and one things that children do in the course of the day, there are quite enough desirable actions to which to call attention. "That is the nice way,—to put the marbles back in the box" or "He is a good boy to bring Father his slippers." It is not as though we hadn't a wide range of actions from which to choose those that have high value for positive suggestion. We should give our children the best possible mental picture of themselves. When we take a snap shot of them to remind ourselves in future years of the "tender grace of a day that is dead," we want to get the children in their brightest moods, not when they are sick or out of sorts. If these pictures were to become actual models which should determine progressive development of the children, instead of being the static reminders that they are, how doubly careful we would be to get "the children at their best."

Let the child think of himself as doing the right thing rather than the wrong thing. To continually call him naughty, is to create a sense of fatality in him, which is apt to emerge in that which will be called hardness of heart when his friends and relatives plead with him to mend his evil ways.

His trouble will really be an impotent will,



made so by scoldings and punishments. It is the function of intelligence to perfect man's instinctive attempts at more and more successful adaptation to environment. A little child's intelligence sets for itself this definite task. There are people who doubt this, but they are the people who never see the natural working of a child's mental activity because they never see the free, untrammelled and unfettered child. As well try to explain the activity of the little creature of the woods in his own habitat, when one has studied him in the cage, as to give a rational explanation of the average child caught in the net of artificial restrictions and echoing the gratuitous assumptions of older people about itself.

A child may be prevented from repeating an undesirable act through fear of punishment,—as he will keep away from a hot stove that has burned him,—but how much better than the reflex influence that simply inhibits effort, is the freedom to perfect that effort. All that a child does in a wrong way is an effort toward adjustment and he will perfect that adjustment if let alone.

A child pulled a bunch of violets from a vase and scattered them upon the floor. His elders saw the act but chose to ignore it. He went out into the yard where the flowers were grow-

ing wild and picked another bunch, taking them in and carefully placing them in the vase, which he pushed a little farther back upon the table, remarking, "Let them be over there so nobody can't throw 'em out."

This incident illustrates two constant features of a child's activities. First, the purely impulsive act which we call wrong is always suggestive of and leads to an elaboration of the "right" action of which it is a reminder. Usually the first part of the process only is observed, as the effort toward adjustment is inhibited by punishment; and because it is the nature of a mental process to repeat itself in kind and in degree, it is the aborted and not the corrected effort that is repeated. The second feature that compels attention in the child who is not a victim of fear, is the impersonal view he takes of the situation which challenges his intelligence. He wishes to make the flowers safe. He eliminates all meddling, his own included. The child mind strives for objective excellence. It is diverted from this end only when you throw him on the defensive by punishing him, thus making him watch for the chance to repeat furtively the ill-adjusted action rather than bending his energies to perfecting the action, and eliminating his own mistakes.

Let the child in his dawning consciousness come

to recognize himself as ever striving toward perfection as he really is (if we are not interposing stumbling blocks to his intelligence and his will). Then he will never be in all his after life, without the disposition to self-respecting effort nor without faith in success.

After all it is the conduct of others that forms the chief subject matter of the child's subconscious elaboration. The feelings, thoughts, and motives behind conduct are all conveyed in their proper setting. We think that we hide these from the child but it is ourselves that we deceive. The child's sincerity is as a clear pool which gives back an absolutely true reflection.

"Why don't you run and play and have a good time once in a while?" was asked of a sober faced little girl. "Mother trusts me so dreadfully that I can't," was the reply; "I always have to tend the baby."

We all believe that "if we train up a child in the way he should go that when he is old he will not depart from it." We know however, of many children who have departed from the way in which their parents meant them to go. There could be no doubt about the excellence of the virtues that these children were told to emulate. There could be no difference of opinion about the sincerity of the parents who sought to train

their children in these virtues. And yet we know of dire failures.

All of the heartbreaking failures relative to children have been because we parents did not know that before the child could practice a certain virtue, his nervous system had to take a picture. All through childhood he is taking pictures. We did not know that our sole concern in this transaction of the pictures was to help him get good ones, and that we must not try to force the inner process by which nervous energy projects these pictures upon the screen of action. "There can be no impression without expression" is an all embracing axiom. And there are those who attend strictly to the business of making the impression. A lady of our acquaintance passed in her daily walks, a yard where she always found the same child playing. And always the lady greeted the child pleasantly without eliciting a response of word or look. She did not mar the impression she was making by any comment on the child's lack of response nor did she cease to greet her in the same cordial manner. The same thing continued—a cheerful salutation on the part of the lady—the strange silent child appearing to take no notice. But there came a time, long after Mrs. H—— had given up hope of a response when the child turned a radiant smiling face and

said "Good Morning."

The time required between the suggestion and the act, may correspond to the tending and the watering and waiting, that follows the planting of the little brown seed. But there can be no departure from the rule that like begets like. If we are disappointed in the expression it is a sure sign that we were mistaken about the impression. Example has such an ugly habit of getting in the way of precept that we are often obscuring the impression that we think we are most careful to make clear. Some one bought a picture of a picnic group because he was told that a dear friend of his made one of the group. But he found that his friend had stood behind some strangers in such a position that his face did not appear at all.

We are very apt to dress up certain virtues to have their pictures taken, and to find that something has gotten in the way of the camera. In other words the child's nervous system turns out a radically different product from the one expected.

But the neural mechanism makes no mistake. We get in the reproduction exactly what we have given in the exposure. Take for example the impression made by one who is laboring to get a child to confess a fault. "Now do you realize

how naughty that was? Aren't you sorry? Aren't you ashamed?" The suggestion is meant to be of humility and the grace of repentance. But watch the child stiffen with self-justification, and if he shows any sorrow it is not because of what he has done, it is a brow-beaten sorrow at being humiliated. Listen as he expresses himself to a playmate a few hours later. "You mean thing, you! What did you do that for? Yes, you meant to, you know you did." When we thought we were teaching him humility he was learning how to accuse, how to reproach, how to "rub it in," how to be superior and to use self-righteous tones.

How then shall we get a clear impression of humility and sorrow for wrong doing? Those mothers are giving these impressions who frankly and sincerely confess their own faults of hasty speech and injustice toward the child. "Mother is sorry she spoke crossly. It was very, very wrong of her." Some one suggests that we forfeit a child's respect by acknowledging ourselves in the wrong. For what do we want our children to respect us,—for an assumption of infallibility? Those who have tried it know that to ask a child's forgiveness for wrong done him, is to gain his confidence in just dealing and to infuse the same spirit of retraction when he is at fault.

Our success then in informing his subconscious mind consists in getting a clear impression of the virtue we wish to inculcate, unobstructed by the opposing vice. When we talk to a child about doing right he accepts the instruction as a matter of course, and—passes it on to others. A person may hold to principles widely at variance with his conduct, because a child's mind is as impartial as a photographer's plate which has included the ugly as well as the beautiful in the landscape which came within the range of its focus. Most of us have found in ourselves such a hodge-podge of inconsistencies that it has taken the best part of a lifetime and more energy than we had to spare to unify and harmonize the conflicting tendencies within ourselves. "For the good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do." The least we can do for our children is to help them begin the sorting out process. We can say to them honestly, "You do that way because mother does it. We will both try to do differently." If we cannot humble ourselves in the presence of childhood and youth, we shall find it very hard to do so before the great white throne, "for their faces do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven."

We should not have the "problem" of obedience if we would give to the child the mental

picture of reciprocity. How can we impart to the child the suggestion of willingness to serve, of compliance with the wishes of others? Says some one, "If it is service you wish to suggest—what better example could be found than the mother's constant service for her child. Does she not wear herself out doing things for him?" To be sure she wears herself out! She sits up nights embroidering his little frocks which he would quite as soon have without embroidery. Much that she does for him is by way of feeding her own vanity, and much else is simply unavoidable. Who would suffer disgrace if she did not do it? Let us stop and count the number of times we stop to do the things he really *wants* us to do for him. How many times do we stop to read to him or tell him stories because *he wants us to*, rather than because we want to amuse or divert him for some ulterior reason of our own. It is wonderful how a child's consciousness becomes charged with the *spirit*, as well as the outward aspects of our actions. We are casting our whole spiritual selves into a stream as it were, to emerge or be cast up again on some farther shore of life.

With frantic zeal reformers and sociologists seek for remedies for colossal wrongs. They say, "This is the congested factory town! This



is the stifling tenement house where babies die! This is the sweatshop where women work and suffer! This is the huge machine that reeks danger to human life! This is the trust that holds up the people's food! This is the political machine that elects officers to serve its own ends! This is the corporation lawyer who gets laws passed for the benefit of the rich! This is the saloon which exists to ruin and destroy!" What shall we do about all this?

These are only effects whose causes are in the subconscious mind of man. The investigation of these abnormalities on the body politic belongs in the realm of applied psychology.

We have medical inspection everywhere offering its ounce of prevention. The state takes the ground that it has a right to determine the living conditions of its citizens in order to ward off disease and death and vice so far as it also is due to physical causes, and to increase the efficiency of its members as well.

It would only be an extension of the principle upon which public sanitation is based, to establish a commission of applied psychology corresponding to the board of health, the purpose of which would be not only to forestall insanity and crime, but to secure maximum results in those modes of adaptation which we know of, in com-

mon terms of virtue and morality. It is to be devoutly hoped that when the wars are over and men turn their minds to the construction of the new world, which we are told is to maintain a lasting peace, that the state extends its prerogative in this perfectly logical direction. Instead of inflicting punishment which repairs no injury, restores nothing to the parties who have been wronged, and merely causes the culprit to suffer without making him better, we shall make intelligent efforts to prevent the development of the type of mind from whence issue anti-social thoughts and acts.

There is not a criminal in the United States whose career could not have been predicted by a psychologist to whom the facts of his early environment (assuming his parents to be part of his environment) were thoroughly known. Perhaps in the next stage of civilization we shall have psychological inspection which shall follow that of the medical inspector who has specified requirements relative to light and air and space. Little children must not only have sunshine but they must have joy and freedom, tenderness and understanding and sympathy.

Poverty will then be abolished because, no restrictions being placed on the development of hereditary aptitudes, the world will be filled with an

outpouring of genius, and of joyous and willing workers.

Crime will be abolished because the wrong mental impressions will not be allowed to cause the child to stumble, and his soul unfettered will run its full course. The subconscious mind will be full of "robes of righteousness" which like garments for the journey will wear to the end.

## OBEDIENCE AND EFFICIENT TRAINING FOR DEMOCRACY

WHILE the English speaking mind for several hundred years has been faithfully ridding itself of the medieval conception of obedience to arbitrary authority as a moral virtue, the adhesion appears greatest at the very place where it should be least desirable.

This same conception of obedience is dominant at the very source of the social organism. Across the mental horizon of the vast majority of those who have to do with children, may be found the trail of the ancient mistake that there is more in the inherent relation of parent or teacher to child than protection and direction on the one hand, and the need of the same on the other. We are obsessed with the inherited assumption that there is a divine right of parents analogous to the divine right of kings, to obedience. This assumption complicates a very simple situation—introduces an extraneous factor into the relation of the adult to the child, and destroys the only subconsciousness that is possible to our philosophy

of government.

The experience of the baby as he gropes for the relations of his physical environment is typical of normal discipline. His environment is determined for him. He is not set free with little bare feet in a yard covered with broken glass and rusty nails. But in proper conditions, and within limits, he is left to make his own adjustments. If he bumps his head against the wall because he did not know that it afforded a barrier to his progress, he encounters no superfluous wrath. The wall does not fall down upon him, neither do you throw down a piece of it upon his poor little head. He is not punished for his lack of knowledge or deprived of his power to acquire it.

In the matter of his social adjustments, this manner of dealing with the child is most scientific and efficient as regards the democratic ideal. When modern psychology has sufficiently illuminated the educational process, it will be seen that the whole duty of the adult world toward the child consists in creating the right environment for him, that is, the right home and the right school, and then, setting him free.

Let no one imagine that he sees, in this method, future radical departures from social moorings. If the most ardent traditionalist in the world wished

to find a sure safeguard for his traditions, he need only turn them loose with children who are free to act upon their own initiative.

For the initiative of a free child always takes the form of elaborating the established order. The most casual observer of children cannot fail to see that a child is a stickler for precedent. The merest two-year-old seizes, by the trousers leg, his father who has thoughtlessly lain his hat upon the table, and pulls him in the direction of the hall-tree.

The usual is the moral to the child. One child stares with wide frightened eyes at the sound of "swear words." The child of a different environment is accosted by a pious person and upon being asked if he swears replies innocently and apologetically, "Ain't much of a hand at it myself," then turning to his chum of whose accomplishments he infers that he may be proud, says, "Cuss for her Jimmie."

When the educational problem resolves itself into the effort to create the proper environment for the child, in short, to turn him loose with the right stimuli, we have a sequence that is three-fold. (1) There is eliminated the clumsy, unscientific, cart-before-the-horse method of forcing the child to do what he would do anyway. (2) There is preserved in its simplicity the funda-

mental relation between parent and child. (3) There is not introduced at the stage of social adjustment, by our treatment of him, a brood of subconscious impressions that serve to abnormalize the whole democratic ideal.

No one can have been the docile subject of arbitrary and external authority without having ingrained the disposition to rule others as he has been ruled. The film of the subconscious faithfully reproduces a series of situations between parent and child in which the superfluous factor, arbitrary force, is always the conspicuous one.

We find ourselves, in more than one respect, at the mercy of this subconscious tendency. How often do we find ourselves trying to force others to our conclusions by something more emphatic than reason. Had we been permitted to make our own mental adjustments we should have acquired mental poise that would have expressed itself in being able to hold our own faith calmly, sweetly, independently. As it is, we must go across the road and rub our beliefs into our neighbor, and he in his turn must rub his into us, both being more concerned with the rubbing in process than with the faith itself.

Men find themselves being ordered about by political bosses and capable of assuming the same prerogatives when their turn comes. The men-

tal attitude of a tyrant is only that of a slave reversed. It is the mental attitude of one deprived of the privilege of making his own adjustments. It is an oscillation between the extremes of authority and dependence or submission. Therefore the tyrant and the slave are forever interchangeable.

Self government is poise, equilibrium; and because it is more difficult to order our own lives than to order others about, all available mental energy is required for the task.

Not until we have eliminated from our educational process the wholly extraneous factor, the submerged impression of personal antagonism, and preserved to that process its primary factors in their simplicity, shall we get the mental background for a democracy based upon the self expression of self governed individuals.

Granted that a relative value to the individual in the attainment of good habits has justified authority enforced by corporal punishment, the net product must always show a maximum of anti-social results to offset a minimum of personal benefit. Charles Lamb's classic essay on the Chinamen's method of obtaining roast pig could not more palpably fail the modern efficiency test. All primitive methods are apt to be wasteful ones. We hold, however, that there could never



be elsewhere such wanton waste as that of appropriating good brain tissue to the perpetuation of the doctrine that "Might makes Right." To so use good brain tissue that might be organized into motor impulses consistent with our day and generation should be considered the unpardonable sin against democracy.

To punish childish offenses or immoralities with personal chastisement is to perpetuate the greatest of immoralities, the over-riding of the weak by the strong. Wherever this human tendency persists, whether it emerges in the brutal treatment of the punished child toward a younger playmate—which he will frankly defend as justified by some difference of opinion between them—or in the spoliation of Belgium by the Kaiser's army, it is always authorized by the same functional process, a state of consciousness set up in the formative years when morality was closely associated with assault and battery.

And we find this tendency everywhere clogging the machinery of our democratic institutions. When undertaking to speak for the social consciousness of our own beloved land, we disown brute force in all its aspects. Yet even as we speak, the counter part of brute force dares to lift its head in our own bosoms. It is that impulse which impels us to gain a social or political end

by modifying conditions so as to create a "force of circumstances" about those whom chance has thrown in our power. It is the same impulse, reversed, that impels us to acquiesce in a situation for any reason except the impersonal and impartial one of its own merit.

Upon this mental tendency is the stamp of that educational process which overshadowed its end by its means and put its emphasis on *obedience*.

There are those who still believe in the goal set for this country by our forefathers, those vigorous gentlemen in knee breeches who could rebel against authority but who could not divest themselves of the disposition to use it. But most of us realize that true independence, that state in which life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is the privilege of every man, is gained by a more fundamental process than rebellion against authority.

At this point several considerations concerning children should clarify the minds of all parents and teachers. To do so would make life sweeter and saner in the next generation.

It has been poignantly said that most of the troubles we get into on account of being human are all because we are not human enough. It appears that intuitive sympathy has not been sufficient to visualize the groping spirit of childhood

and youth through the plastic years. It has remained, instead, for science to make clear.

*The Nature and Significance and Duration of  
Infancy*

An old servant wiser with intuitive sympathy than his day and generation, used to say to children weeping from personal chastisement, "Serves ye right, ye had no business to ha' been a child." The grim sarcasm was intended for the elders.

When parental instinct shall have been made intelligent, the problems of infancy will not be so quickly thrust out of their natural setting and made to assume all kinds of artificial aspects.

The modern mother is fortified for any demand upon her patience when she has learned to look upon the mischief of children, from the old servant's standpoint, as a matter of unspecialized neurones, a consequence of being children. She sees in all of his troublesome activities, climbing up to get the clock, knocking things off the shelf and pulling them off the table, the age-long instinct of his brain to organize itself in harmony with his environment. She sees him ever in a state of transition. She knows that his passion for keeping puppies, little green snakes

and bantam roosters in his room will not last. Tenderness for what he is, respect for what he is becoming! But it is not the sentimental but the practical aspects of this attitude that we wish to emphasize.

A mother without the scientific vision describes her two-year-old son's persistence in touching the cut glass. "Again and again he goes back to it," she says. "He has a strong will and deliberately makes up his mind to disobey." The enlightened mother knows that he hasn't any mind to "make up." She sees the sensorimotor process pure and simple. She sees the little brain without a switch board. She sees a response to stimulus so intense as to preclude all other sense impressions and to leave no alternative but attention to the glittering object. Such a mother creates for the child an environment in which there are objects suitable for him to touch. She sees that the sense of touch is his chief working sense. And being the generalized sense out of which all of the other senses have developed, its activity stimulates these other senses to take to themselves their special functions.

Her sense of values are no longer confused. She does not allow nasty little questions of conventional discipline to intrude upon this child's overwhelming need to develop by everything

that he touches. She knows that his little captive spirit can only free itself—can only learn its limitations and its possibilities by contact with its environment. So far from calculating what is in his mind, she gives him a chance to acquire a mind. She protects him from the complex and artificial environment which the modern adult creates for his own convenience—and vanity. She sees that he can habituate himself to a few simple requirements only gradually, and she diligently tempers for him the complex situations.

There comes a day when the child is told to pick up a book that has fallen from the table. The child hesitates, looks at the speaker and does not move. The traditional mother would translate this hesitation as stubbornness, and after repeated commands would slap the child's hands declaring that it is her duty to teach him to mind. She has seemed strangely to overlook the fact that when he has not minded the punishment publishes *her* failure.

The enlightened mother sees no need of complicating the situation with traditional theories that have no place in it. She sees this child's problem as his life problem will always be, from learning to tie his necktie to building a railroad—simply a matter of adjustment. Obedience in the

larger sense—to the law of God, the law of man, the law of Nature—means adaptation to a given order. While the child's social adjustments may be more difficult to achieve than his physical adjustments, their bearings more delicate and the issues critical, yet the duty of the mother remains the same, simply to protect from too complicated and difficult situations—to temper the stimuli to the child's power of response or resistance.

How shall the child be taught to act under direction?

The mother sees in his hesitation to pick up the book the bewilderment of a nervous system that has been keyed to the direct stimulus. The law of the child's being has been imitation. If he sees another person in the act of picking up books he inevitably "falls to" and picks up books. If he hears another person repeating the sentence "Pick up the book," he repeats the words. Each repetition is a distinct and separate act of imitation, unrelated and unattached. Gradually the words may become related and may signify the action. The child is not even fully conscious of himself as detached from his environment. He does not realize himself as acting independently. His mental helplessness is to his mother as pathetic as his physical helplessness. She feels that the child's nervous system is groping for the

visual stimulus and comes to his aid. She gently forces the book into the little hands and as gently compels the act which the words have indicated. She accompanies all spoken requests or directions with the same aid until the child is used to the abstraction of language and until "muscle memory," unconscious habit, has become fixed.

This same child some day becomes conscious that he obeys his mother, but there is no autocratic background to this consciousness. It is not a consciousness of himself as being forced, and correlatively, as forcing others to do things.

There is instead the democratic consciousness of self expression. The beautiful social grace of acquiescence emerges as a result of doing things with and by and through and for others—in cooperation with others. There is the mental attitude of "Live and let live" toward his playmates.

A neighbor's child of eight came in one day to play with the writer's child of four. At a certain stage in the play the older child administered a vigorous slapping to the younger one. Members of the household crowded about with exclamations of indignation and consternation. The little visitor faced them with unperturbed candor in her clear and beautiful eyes as she said, "He wouldn't mind me, we were playing

school." There was nothing more to be said. To dislodge her from her legitimate conclusion would be to question the moral basis of her "bringing up."

Granted that the old fashioned slapping quickened the child's intelligence of what was required of him—that it precipitated his consciousness of himself as detached from his environment—what a criminal waste of good brain tissue to replace the natural background (common consciousness) which would inevitably become the background for the conception of unity of interest and social cooperation of a child's life by the assumption of antagonism which the theory of obedience implies. This assumption in its turn furnishes the ground work of the conception of diversity of interest—to be unified by external authority.

It is not the least of the offensiveness of personal chastisement that it absorbs the attention which should be brought to bear upon the point at issue. The imperative need of the child who is being trained is neither punishment nor forgiveness for failure, but success in affecting his adjustments.

That success will be secured by the efficient educator of the future who has forgotten the theory that children are "naturally stubborn," but who sees in the molecular inertia of a little



child's brain, a force to be overcome, as real as the pull of gravity upon his muscles. And in exactly the same spirit that he would run to aid a child staggering under the weight of a great bundle which some one had unwittingly given him to carry, so the efficient educator will rid the child of many artificial conditions which are at present taxing his strength to no purpose. He will rid himself of that obsession of authority which makes obedience a game of "Simon says thumbs up, Simon says thumbs down"—"Sit here" or "Sit there," just because I tell you to—paternal caprice winning out against childish caprice. The child will be left to that larger obedience, to those inner laws of growth and development by which he comes into his own as "the heir of all the ages."

The present day teacher or parent is always thwarting this higher obedience when he interrupts the child's spontaneous interest, when he breaks in upon his concentration and calls him from tasks which his own initiative has chosen.

But where protection or direction is plainly needed, that success which is the point at issue is gained by manipulating circumstances, by tempering stimuli to the child's developing power of response or resistance and by repeating the situations in which a favorable response is gained until

that response can be relied upon.

In short, the efficient educator will justify the high adventure of democracy by preserving the democratic consciousness and harmonizing free self expression with social cooperation.

## TRUTHFULNESS

*"And Heaven's rich instincts in me grew,  
As effortless as woodland nooks  
Send violets up and paint them blue."*

LOWELL.

NEARLY every intelligent mother knows that truthfulness in a young child is not identical with the ability to state facts accurately.

Impressions produce effects upon the child mind out of all proportion to their magnitude and out of proportion to effects produced by like impressions on the minds of older people. A child says that he saw a pig—"a teeny, weeny little pig—about as big as this" (indicating a portion of his little finger). He is describing the effect in his own mind of comparing diminutive size with the huge bulk of the "big mother pig."

We understand that children cannot make correct estimates of size, number, distance, etc., because they have not had the experience that is synonymous with sense training. So we wait for the judgment that is solely the product of sense experience. We remember, too, that the child

has not the language with which to express the result of his observations in terms of adult understanding, and we have patience with his inaccuracies.

Again, mothers have come to smile with loving tolerance while children relate what is real only in their imagination. And sometimes, perhaps, we would fain prolong the period when fairies, and brownies, and pixies dwell with our little ones. We almost dread the on-coming literalism, that will sooner or later make it true that,

“A primrose on the river’s brim, a yellow primrose is to him,  
And nothing more.”

It is interesting to watch the transitional phases in that period of the child’s development when the subjective is surrendering more and more to the edict of the objective. A little boy of three, pursued, with stumbling baby feet, but with ever renewed persistence, the hens in the back yard. His victims forever eluded him with no inconvenience to themselves, but one day imagination made real to him his burning desire and he felt himself the valiant captor of his prey. He related with honest enthusiasm his experience!

“One long time ago this to-morrow, I caught

a chicken. Joe chopped his head off and we ate the outside of him." Gratification was marred by no misgiving at this age.

At five the same child told about a bear which he said our next neighbors had in a cage in their barn. "It's just like the bears in the funny papers, only this one is real," he declared. "Are you sure that you saw it?" inquired his elders. "No, I ain't sure I saw it, I just saw it." "Would we see it if we went over there and looked in the barn?" was the further inquiry. The child seemed to ponder this. "Maybe they'd have hunted it and shot it, and cut it up and ate it by this time," he said finally. It was plain that recollection was witnessing to the fact that his imagination sometimes played him false, or that the subjective could not always be relied upon to correspond with the objective, even though it seemed as real.

We may trust the purely fanciful to dissipate itself, but those fancies which have a part foundation in real events may furnish us occasions for helping the child establish his mental connections with the objective world.

It is our duty to help him correct his inaccuracies of judgment, not however with implied reproach for them. If he says there were a hundred people in a certain place, when there are only eight or ten,

we may perhaps get him to name over the persons separately until he has reduced them to their actual number. Likewise his "teeny, weeny, little pig," of little finger fame, may be made to assume its proper proportions by the aid of substituted comparisons. Rectitude of expression may be learned as dovetailing is learned, and it should be taught as impartially, and impersonally, and in as "matter-of-fact" a manner, thus leaving undisturbed the child's sweet unconsciousness of self.

We are coming now in our little dissertation on truthfulness, to the point which most mothers consider crucial to the subject, namely, the inclination of a child to sometimes consciously and willfully misrepresent facts.

If we carefully consider, we shall have to admit that almost the only occasions when a child is consciously untruthful are those when fear of punishment restrains him from telling the truth.

A mother asked the Wise Man how she might train her child to tell the truth. "Nothing could be simpler," said the Wise Man, "just *let* him tell it." And surely no virtue could be said to flourish more readily by so purely a negative process. Mothers who have entertained guests and big sisters who have entertained beaux, can frequently recall when truthfulness, unhindered, ran rampant, spreading itself like a green bay tree

and shedding embarrassment erstwhile.

To be sure, the habit of lying may become so fixed that a child may lie when neither fear nor self-interest is present, as an excuse for lying, but fear has usually been the origin of the habit. Dare we, in the face of the consequences it entails, do anything to ever risk originating the habit of falsehood or to aid in fixing the habit?

A mother said that she had a child who lied in reply to every question that was asked him and asked how she could prevent him from doing so. "Don't ask him any questions," was the reply. To the extent that a habit ceases to be exercised it weakens and conversely every repetition of the objectionable act serves to strengthen the nervous mechanism that after awhile goes off automatically like a firecracker, needing only the touch of the accustomed stimulus which in the case of this lying child was a mere question on any subject. The process of re-educating such a child is so much harder than guiding the unspoiled but irresponsible little mind in the paths of truthfulness to which it is disposed, in the first place.

Perhaps there is nothing practically new in the psychological explanation of habit. Perhaps men have always realized that habit was doing a thing until one could not help doing it. And surely there is nothing new in exclaiming over the

tragedy of bad habit, even though we are almost able to visualize destiny as it operates in a neural process. There may be one feature of the modern presentation of habit that can lay claim to novelty. And this is the exploitation of the good habit rather than the bad.

And if we are going to prepare for automatic goodness rather than permit automatic badness, we must set intelligently about it to inhibit bad tendencies till good ones become established. Since experience of a certain kind tempts to more experience of the same kind, let us keep the child telling the truth until repetition has fixed beyond recall the tendency to be open and candid. This is a simple problem. The child's natural disposition to truthfulness cannot survive in the presence of fear. Then remove fear and let this disposition strengthen, unhindered.

Why do we visit displeasure and punishment upon a child because of the weakness and limitations of his moral nature? Especially if we do this for untruthfulness, are we defeating the end we sought, which was to find out just how the child had failed. If we can find out just how he has failed we can go to work to help him to make good in that particular. To be sure there are some parents who act as though punishment were the end sought, and that by punishing they



were satisfying some obscure and unrealizable moral requirement. Most of us realize, however, that the end sought, the moral requirement to be satisfied, is that of making the child a good child. It is very important then that we know wherein he fails to do right that we may help him to do better. If we would know the flaws in a child's nature as we would know the flaws in a valuable piece of machinery, we must not do anything to destroy the utterly frank and impersonal attitude he has toward his own acts (until we have made him self-conscious by praise or blame) and the frankness with which he reveals everything pertaining to himself. A child came crying into the house. The usual question was asked: "What is the matter?" Then came the sobbing reply: "I hit Bruvver and Bruvver hit me." If this household had been one in which punishment took the place of really mending matters, of adjusting relations, and removing occasions of friction, of bringing in tired little boys when they had become cross through being over-taxed, perhaps—we should have heard instead of "I hit Bruvver, and Bruvver hit me," simply "Bruvver hit me."

A child is asked if he has done something for which he has been threatened with punishment. He replies that he has not. He is deceiving. Yes, and so is the little worm which is green, just like

the leaf upon which it is feeding. The young fawn in the thicket is also a deceiver. He is the color of the thicket in which he hides. The Creator has given to weak and defenseless creatures the power to take on a protective coloring. The child is also a weak, defenseless creature in whom the strongest instinct is that of self-preservation. He also turns the color of his environment; in other words, he adjusts himself to the situation in which he finds himself, in the way that will save him from pain. But we want this child to grow into a man who can tell the truth even in the face of pain and danger. Yes! and there will be other values upon that day, than the pains and pleasures of the present moment. There is no yesterday to the little child and no to-morrow; but the present moment is all vividness to him with its imminent pain or pleasure. And because he is a weak, primitive, little being he succumbs to temptation.

To meet temptation when one is prepared to withstand it, is to be morally strengthened. Otherwise it is to be overwhelmed and destroyed. The child's tender spirit cannot bear the brunt of harsh disapproval any more than he could fare forth in the world alone and protect his little body from fierce elements. We must perform a similar service for body and soul until both are strong. We pray for ourselves, "Lead us not into tempta-

tion." Shall we deny to the child the mercy that we ask for ourselves? This is but another opportunity to manifest the spirit of Him Who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

Once, in company with a very little child, we watched the full moon rise above a mountain. As the resplendent object sailed into the sky as though set free from a bank of dark green forest, the child whispered softly, with awe in her intent face, "Don't scare it, Mamma." Many older people have shared the hushed and reverent feeling of the child in the presence of some of the sights of which Nature vouchsafes us but a brief enjoyment. And there is the instinctive feeling, too, that one would refrain from any act even to a breath, lest one hasten the passing of a lovely sight. What we feel concerning natural phenomena, we may much more appropriately feel before the innocence of childhood which comes "trailing clouds of glory" into a world that we have made poor with sordid aims. And the most resplendent quality that the child brings into older human lives is sincerity. Moreover, this blessed and beautiful thing will stay with us if we will let it—nay, if we do not drive it away.

Children sometimes perceive that truthfulness is more than a simple matter of yes or no, and that to affirm a lesser fact is to deny a greater one.

They see us struggle with such a complication sometimes without extricating ourselves very successfully. Why lay upon them a burden which we ourselves are unable to cope with. That disposition has been strongly condemned in a certain characterization of the Pharisees. "For they bind heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." A lady was entertaining an honored guest, an elderly man who was addicted to the habit of smoking. After dinner he said to his hostess, "Do you mind if I smoke?" Now the children knew that their mother detested tobacco smoke, and that it never failed to give her a headache. But they heard her entreat the gentleman to "make himself quite at home, and by all means to smoke." He looked at her a trifle doubtfully and repeated, "You are sure you don't mind?" This time she affirmed cheerfully, "Not in the least."

This lady would have explained her fibbing by saying that her desire for her guest's comfort was the larger fact and the truth present to her consciousness when she made her statement. She would have said that in denying her own physical discomfort she was being true to her hospitable intentions, which was really the important factor in the situation. And yet this lady was one who

required in her children, most literal exactitude of statement. But children likewise find themselves caught in a mesh of circumstances which force them to contradict, what seems to them (for the time at least) negligible facts, in order to defend what seems to them worthy motives.

Children are without the resourcefulness of their elders, in the use of language, and they cannot summon to the aid of their dilemma the arguments with which older people justify themselves against the accusation of falsehood. There is nothing more pathetic than to see a child struggling against such accusation and vainly trying to establish himself on a footing with other privileged persons in the matter of casuistry. But of course children are not supposed to be able to judge of the integrity of their own motives; though they are supposed to know that they may not do what they perceive every one else to be doing. It was explained to a child that nobody who told lies could go to heaven. "Well, then," the comment ran, "it must be awful lonesome up there with nobody but God and George Washington."

If we cannot avoid evasions and ambiguities ourselves, we may at least refrain from the hypocrisy that would make wrong in the child what we justify in ourselves. We may refrain from our

cross examination which violates with rude suspicion, the sincerity which is the very essence of the child's nature.

The greatest of all revealed truth is the truth of personality. The personality of the child is unfolding in the acts by which he attempts his adjustment to environment and the words which are likewise efforts at adaptation. We may help toward perfect harmony, which is perfect truth, not by probing him with silly questions as to what he has done and why and when he did it (a child's sense of time and of adult standards and values are always confused), but by keeping before ourselves and before him the vision of those great truths which lead to ideal conduct. Hawthorne has described the success of this method in his story of "The Great Stone Face." "It was a happy lot for children to grow up to manhood or womanhood with the Great Stone Face before their eyes, for all the features were noble and the expression was at once grand and sweet, as if it were the glow of a vast warm heart, that embraced all mankind in its affections, and had room for more. It was an education only to look at it. . . . As we began with saying, a mother and her little boy sat at their cottage door, gazing at the Great Stone Face and talking about it."

"There can be no impression without expres-

sion." So runs our psychological motto. The life of the boy Ernest became through long years, one fine expression of the truth expressed in the noble countenance of the Great Stone Face. It was a wise mother who sat with her little boy at their cottage door, gazing afar to where the setting sun illuminated for them "the wondrous features." This mother of Hawthorne's great story was not twitting her child of wrong doing at the close of the day! She did not say to him, "Mother doesn't love you when you are naughty," thus sowing seeds of despair and doubt in his little soul. In loving companionship they sat, their minds centered upon a common interest. She was preserving in her child the "tender and confiding simplicity," which has been destroyed in the children who tell lies to their mothers. She was preserving in his mind the oneness of their relations, which has been destroyed in the minds of those children who hide things from their mothers. We have a significant account of this oneness of spirit when we are told that Ernest "was dutiful to his mother, and helpful to her in many ways, assisting her much with his little hands, and more with his loving heart."

It is not enough that we forbear to criticize and discourage the child in his striving for that larger truth, which is harmony with his environment. It

is not enough that we, recognizing in his most faulty acts and words, this instinctive striving, surround the child with impressions of truth and of beauty. There is still another way in which we must help him. *We must forbear to interfere with the expression of his personality.*

If the child is not a criminal, whom we are at liberty to cross-examine, neither is he a monkey or a clown whose business is to amuse people. It is not enough that we surround him with objects of reverence, we must reverence him. At least, we may not accord him less respect than is due from well bred people, in their association with one another.

Yet, how far from the delicate reserve, and courteous restraint of good breeding, is the bantering of children, by those who in other respects have good claims to being gentlefolk. The quizzing, the prodding of children with questions in order to draw forth bewildered and ludicrous replies, is simply tearing away the wrappings of modesty and self-respect, as a closed bud is torn open by wanton hands. As a result, one has the smart, pert child, taking his cue from the rude laughter that follows his remarks. Much of the so-called amusing conversation of children is as sad as the scattered petals of a rose that was meant to bloom throughout the length of human



would they ever sing.

Presumably, however, the universe had not greatly missed fifty frogs or more from the resources of that springtime, nevertheless there was a pathos about the old tin can and the fate of the pollywogs deprived of their native pond and the quickening currents of Mother Earth.

There came a time when the little boy himself was captured and confined. He was taken from his natural environment—the wood-lot, meadow brook, the orchard, or maybe only the sand pile in the back yard, where he had been learning by the use of his hands and feet and the exercise of sense and wit, where nature and his own developing faculties were beguiling him to the mimicry of the arts and crafts and the labors to which men go forth.

Thus compulsory education with the best intentions of developing his potentialities comes to every little boy, silences the happy shouts that swell his growing lungs and constitutes itself a criminal court to sit in judgment on a whisper. It puts the clamps of conventional postures upon his climbing, jumping, wriggling body and arraigns him for the crime of shuffling his feet.

Frogs that never sang—a little boy's mistake that resulted in a bit of pathos on an April day! How does this differ from the crude human ex-

periment with the most precious and plastic material that the universe affords, the mind and body of a child? It differs as pathos differs from tragedy. So cries the voice of the new education which protests eloquently that no latent possibility wrapped up in the little boy can be spared, and that the traditional school violates the law of his growth.

We are told that education should not proceed upon the assumption that the child's mind is a sort of receptacle like the pouch of a marsupial to be filled with so many facts per day. Modern psychology reveals the growth of the mind as a dynamic process through which more and more appropriate response is being made to environmental stimuli, which process involves the forgetting as well as the remembering of facts.

The Montessori school for young children is a practical assertion that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are among the inalienable rights of the child, and moreover that liberty *in* the pursuit of happiness is the essential condition for the development of any physical or mental life worth while.

The Fairhope school in Alabama, for older pupils, discards the formal task and waits reverently upon the factors and forces that govern the child's response to the stimuli of the favoring

environment in which he is turned loose. The breeze does not bring perfume on schedule time or the leaf burst forth at the striking of the clock, nor does the spontaneous interest of the child coincide with the fixed program of the formal educator. Ministering to the child's needs means being alert to those mental tides indicated by his curiosity, which, taken at their flood (of questioning) leads on to the good fortune of knowledge.

The shifting and diverse interests of the child are not meaningless and valueless. They are to the final and permanent interests what the random and apparently accidental movements of infant limbs are to the coördinated movements in the ultimately successful attempts at walking. One and another hereditary tendency is stimulated and quickened to life as nature searches out in the racial depths for that peculiar and special gift that is to synthesize all of the others and to enable the individual to find his true calling. It is vital not only to the personal happiness but also to the success of our democracy that Carlyle's saying should be true of every one: "Blessed is the man who has found his work. Let him ask for no other blessing."

"The tragedy of life is not battle, murder and sudden death, so much as it is failure in initiative—a commonplace, colorless existence due to the

sapping of the red blood of endeavor in men who have never found a "calling."

The above grounds for a more flexible plan of education are quite generally conceded. The objections which still persist to such a plan find their answer in a truth so plain that it is in danger of being overlooked.

When, they ask, is the "free" child, so active in the pursuit of happiness, to acquire concentration and disciplined habits of study? This quite pitifully and poignantly brings out the fact that to these questioners "free" children must have been very scarce. They have built a theory upon a scarcity of facts much as if one were to declare that "Kings cannot learn to sift ashes properly." The absence of proof makes the argument unfair. The present school system has been built upon the assumption that the child is naturally averse to mental effort. The normal, healthy child is no more averse to mental effort than he is to climbing a tree or having a new tooth. All three are merely incidents of vigorous growth. The brain is an organ dependent upon the same laws of functioning and growth as those which govern a gland or a muscle. Nourishing blood and energizing nerve currents are necessary for the activity of all alike, and it is the *free impulse* to action that reacts in the greatest physical and mental vigor.

Our child labor laws are a recognition of the law of physical growth. A free child at his play is putting forth as much or more physical energy as the average little factory worker, but it is only a child busy at a self-imposed task, climbing trees and building dams, that is being vitalized in every organ and built up in every cell.

There is as much difference in the wide-awake mentality of the finding-out-for-himself child, and the enervated brain functioning of the "compulsory" student, as there is between the red cheeks and firm muscles of the child choosing his own exercise and the pale and flabby little toiler of the shops and factories.

"I want to go to China," said a little boy not yet five. "Martha said it was right down straight under the ground, but you can't get through the ground." Whereupon followed a careful and detailed explanation of how he might go. No attempt had been made before to teach him the shape of the earth, but it was likened to an apple and his journey to China made analogous to that of a fly crawling from one side of the apple around to the other. The laddie pondered this information and then remarked, "And the fly would be looking toward the core," showing that he had comprehended the information. "But why do you want to go to China?" was in turn asked him.

"To see a Chinaman eat a rat," was the quick reply.

Text book information is always subordinate to the original interests of the mind, else why not make education consist in merely committing to memory the dictionary and the encyclopedia?

The full-blooded grasp of the subject in hand manifested by the child who is free to satisfy his own curiosities is what we want in the adult; therefore is it not quite scientific to utilize for education, conditions that produce the power of mental concentration? To let the child grow his own ability for acquiring knowledge simply by letting him exercise it, is not different from letting him grow his own muscle in the same way. It is forced labor that dwarfs the body and it is forced mental labor that stultifies the mind of the child.

"But," says the enquirer, "in those schools where the pupil is allowed to study what he likes when he likes, how is he to acquire discipline and continuity of application?" For answer, simply let him observe the free child.

The writer came upon a very little boy whose short, fat legs were doubled under him in a position that was evidently so uncomfortable that he was clenching his little fists and holding his little form tensely rigid in the effort to endure his painful position. No one, however zealous for the

